U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Idaho State Office
1387 S. Vinnell Way
Boise, Idaho 83709

December 2025

Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning

Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment for Idaho

DOI-BLM-WO-2300-2022-0001-RMP-EIS

https://www.blm.gov/programs/fish-and-wildlife/sage-grouse

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US Fish and Wildlife, Rachel Woita, James Yule

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and
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Cooperating Agencies

United States Forest Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation
Idaho Governor's Office of Energy and Mineral Resources
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Department of Lands
Idaho State Department of Agriculture
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Idaho Army National Guard

Blaine County
Clark County
Custer County

Dear Reader Letter

In reply refer to:
1610 (ID930)
Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is pleased to announce the issuance of the Idaho Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment for the Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) Rangewide Planning in Idaho. This document includes both the Idaho ROD and the Approved RMP Amendment for the Idaho portion of the rangewide planning area. The Idaho ROD and Approved RMP Amendment, as well as all associated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents, are available online on the BLM's National NEPA Register at: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016719/510.

The Proposed RMP Amendment /Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) was released on November 15, 2024 and was subject to a 30-day protest period that ended December 16, 2024. Resolution of protests is delegated to the BLM Assistant Director for Resources and Planning on behalf of the BLM Director. The BLM received 60 unique protest letters during the 30-day protest period. The resolutions of the protests are summarized in the BLM Director's Protest Resolution Report: Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning Proposed RMP Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement, which is available at: https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/public-participation/protest-resolution-reports

Thank you for your interest in the Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning RMP Amendment. There are numerous values and concerns associated with the management of greater sage-grouse habitat across the West. We remain committed to implementing the policies and conservation measures that will meet the BLM's multiple-use and sustained yield mandate, provide for the habitat needs to conserve GRSG, avoid the need to list under the Endangered Species Act, and minimize long-term regulatory burdens. Your continued involvement in the management of public lands in Idaho is invaluable to help ensure BLM management will sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of BLM-administered lands for present and future generations.

Sincerely,

Kim Prill

Kim Prill
State Director (Acting), Idaho
Bureau of Land Management

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section Page

RECORD OF DECISION 1

Introduction 1
Boise District 1
Idaho Falls District 1
Twin Falls District 1
Decision Area 2
Decision 3
Purpose and Need 3
Alternatives Considered 6
Alternative 1 (Applicable Decisions from the 2015 Approved RMP Amendment) 6
Alternative 2 – No Action (Applicable Decisions from the 2019 Approved RMP Amendment) 7
Alternative 3 7
Alternative 4 7
Alternative 5 8
Alternative 6 8
Proposed RMP Amendment 8
Rationale for Decision 9
Habitat Management Areas 10
Allocations and Management Direction 11
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern 17
Rationale Conclusion 18
Changes and Clarifications made between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD 18
Significant Changes made between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD 19
Additional Idaho-specific Significant Changes between the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD for Idaho: 20
Clarifications and Edits between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD 20
Mitigation 27
Consultation and Coordination 27
Tribal Government Consultation 27
State Historic Preservation Office Coordination 28
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation 28
Cooperating Agencies 29
Governor's Consistency Review 29
RMP Amendment Monitoring 30
Public Involvement 30
Project Website 30
Scoping Process 30
Draft RMP Amendment/EIS Comment Period 31
Final EIS Availability Period and Proposed RMP Amendment Protest Period 31
Changes to Proposed RMP Amendment Comment Period 32
Ongoing Actions 32

Availability of the Approved RMP Amendment 32
Approval 32

APPROVED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 33

Habitat Management Area Alignments 33

GLOSSARY 53

REFERENCES 65

APPENDICES 111

Appendix 1 – Tables and Maps 111
Appendix 2 – Comparison of Prior Greater Sage-Grouse RMP Management Direction with Approved RMP Amendment 111
Appendix 3 – Greater Sage-grouse Monitoring Framework 111
Appendix 4 – Greater Sage-grouse Habitat Indicators and Benchmarks 111
Appendix 5 – Livestock Grazing Best Management Practices and Design Features and Supplemental Information 111
Appendix 6 – Adaptive Management Framework 111
Appendix 7 - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Section 7 Concurrence Memo 111
Appendix 8 – Summary of Public Comments on the Proposed Changes Between Proposed RMPA and ROD 111
Appendix B – Buffers 111

Record of Decision

INTRODUCTION

This Idaho Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment for Idaho amends a subset of greater sage-grouse (GRSG) goals, objectives, allocations and management direction in 18 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Land Use Plans in Idaho. These include resource management plans (RMPs), management framework plans (MFPs), and one monument plan. Following is a list of the plans that are amended by BLM district:

Boise District

- Bruneau MFP (1983)
- Four Rivers Field Office RMP (2023)
- Owyhee RMP (1999)
- Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area RMP (2008)

Idaho Falls District

- Big Desert MFP (1981)
- Big Lost MFP (1983)
- Challis RMP (1999)
- Lemhi RMP (1987)
- Little Lost and Birch Creek MFP (1981)
- Medicine Lodge RMP (1985)
- Pocatello RMP (2012)

Twin Falls District

- Bennett Hills Timmerman Hills MFP (1980)
- Cassia RMP (1981)
- Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Management Plan (2006)
- Magic MFP (1980)
- Monument RMP (1985)
- Sun Valley MFP (1981)
- Twin Falls MFP (1982)

This Approved RMP Amendment builds on the work that was completed in BLM's 2015 and 2019 GRSG RMP Amendments and responds to the loss of habitat and the declining population of the GRSG, a ground-dwelling bird that was under consideration by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Idaho is in the central to northcentral part of GRSG range and is connected with GRSG populations in Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana. There are over 1,000 active leks in Idaho (Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information System [IFWIS] 2024). GRSG symbolize Idaho's high desert sagebrush country and is considered an 'umbrella' species of the sagebrush ecosystem. Sage-grouse depend on sagebrush and need good-quality sagebrush habitat for nesting, rearing their young, and food and cover throughout the year. BLM manages over half of all the GRSG Habitat Management Areas (HMA) in Idaho. Sage-grouse management and planning is conducted in conjunction with the Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG). Background on the prior

GRSG planning processes can be found in the Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning (GRSG) Proposed RMP Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) in Chapter 1.2 GRSG Planning Background. The Approved RMP Amendment provides the BLM Idaho with locally relevant management actions and allocations that achieve rangewide GRSG conservation goals consistent with the BLM's multiple use and sustained yield mission and in support of coordinated GRSG management efforts with federal, state, local, and Tribal partners.

The Idaho Approved RMP Amendment amends language and polygons relating to HMAs. This RMP Amendment identifies updated habitat management areas that allow for the application of habitat conservation in areas where it will be most beneficial and effective. Within these habitat management areas, updated rangewide management direction for the following resource topics will be applied: utility-scale solar and wind development; fluid, saleable, and non-energy leasable mineral development; major and minor rights-of-way (ROW) development; livestock grazing; wild horse and burros. Rangewide management direction was also updated for predation; mitigation; disturbance caps; adaptive management; management for non-habitat; habitat objectives, lek definitions to align with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), and the monitoring framework. Additionally, the BLM Idaho is also updating management direction for: saleable minerals (gravel), nuclear and hydropower energy development, Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening Criteria, application of required design features (RDFs) and buffers, and the desired condition for the habitat objective for perennial grass height.

Throughout this planning process, the BLM engaged with Tribes, cooperating agencies, and the public, as described below. This decision is based on review and substantive comments from federal, Tribal, state, and local governments and agencies; industry; conservation organizations; and the 13 cooperating agencies that participated in the planning process in Idaho. The BLM worked closely with cooperating agencies that engaged throughout the planning process to develop alternatives and guide the development of locally relevant GRSG management. The signing of this Idaho Record of Decision (ROD) represents the conclusion of this planning process.

This ROD approves the BLM's proposal to implement the management direction presented in the attached Approved RMP Amendment in the Idaho decision area. This Approved RMP Amendment was described as the Proposed RMP Amendment in the Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning Proposed RMP Amendment and Final EIS that was released on November 15, 2024, with clarifications and modifications made during the Governor's Consistency Review process and to align with changes in regulation and policy, as noted in the **Changes and Clarifications** section below.

DECISION AREA

The planning area is the geographic area within which the BLM will make decisions. A planning area boundary includes all lands regardless of ownership, but the BLM can only make decisions on public lands and federal mineral estate within the agency's jurisdiction. This rangewide amendment planning area includes all lands within the boundaries of BLM field offices that contain GRSG habitat, excluding the Bi-state distinct population segment (DPS) and the Columbia Basin DPS, which are addressed in other planning efforts. The planning area for this RMP Amendment includes portions of California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming, as shown in Map 1, Planning Area, **Appendix 1**.

The decision area includes the lands within the planning area for which the BLM has authority to make land use and management decisions, including areas where BLM administers subsurface minerals. In Idaho the decision area for this Approved RMP Amendment applies to BLM-administered GRSG habitat management areas as shown in Map 2, **Appendix 1** (Idaho Decision Area Map). The Idaho decision area includes

approximately 8.8 million acres of public lands and 2.0 million subsurface acres administered by BLM Idaho located in 21 Idaho counties: Ada, Adams, Bear Lake, Bingham, Blaine, Bonneville, Butte, Camas, Caribou, Cassia, Clark, Custer, Elmore, Fremont, Gem, Gooding, Jefferson, Jerome, Lemhi, Lincoln, Madison, Minidoka, Oneida, Owyhee, Payette, Power, Twin Falls, and Washington.

DECISION

The decision is hereby made to approve the attached Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Approved RMP Amendment, including Idaho-specific direction, for Idaho. This RMP Amendment was prepared under the regulations implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) (43 CFR Part 1600). An environmental impact statement was prepared for this RMP Amendment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969[1] and the BLM planning regulations 43 CFR Part 1600. The BLM selected the RMP Amendment after careful consideration of input from cooperating agencies, Tribes, the Governor of Idaho, and the public.

The decisions contained in the Approved RMP Amendment are expressed as goals, objectives, allocations, and management directions. The decisions identified in the Approved RMP Amendment are final and effective when this ROD is signed. The decisions contained in the Approved RMP Amendment recognize and are consistent with valid existing rights. Future BLM decisions, including those that authorize third-party actions, would also be consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law. The decisions in this Approved RMP Amendment are planning-level decisions. Additional steps will be taken to implement on-the-ground activities and may require additional design, environmental review, mitigation, and monitoring. The BLM will prepare appropriate documentation where necessary to comply with the NEPA when making implementation-level decisions.

The Proposed RMP Amendment / Final EIS did not reconsider all existing GRSG management actions in the 2015 and 2019 RMP Amendments consistent with BLM's planning criteria and purpose and need, detailed below. Management actions in the 2015 and 2019 RMP Amendments that are not amended, will remain in effect (refer to **Appendix 2**, Comparison of Prior Greater Sage-Grouse RMP Management Direction with Approved RMP Amendment, or Appendix 2 of the Final EIS).

PURPOSE AND NEED

As required by NEPA, the BLM identified the purpose and need for this RMP amendment and developed a range of alternatives to meet the purpose and need (refer to Section 1.4.2 of the Final EIS). The preliminary purpose and need statement in the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS was refined in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS in response to cooperating agency and public input, and reads as follows:

The BLM's purpose is to amend certain goals, objectives, allocations, and management direction for GRSG management in its RMPs to respond to updated scientific information and changing land uses and provide for consistent and effective rangewide conservation based on biological information that is responsive to locally relevant habitat variability. Following an internal review of the effectiveness of 2015 and 2019 RMP Amendment decisions, including the degree to which those decisions sufficiently addressed threats to GRSG habitats and continued population declines, while balancing the BLM's ability to manage public lands for other uses, and as informed by updated scientific findings and feedback received from Tribal, federal, state, and

[1] The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA are rescinded, effective April 11, 2025. The BLM has complied with applicable procedures/regulations, including DOI's procedures/regulations implementing NEPA at 43 CFR Part 46, to meet the agency's obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

local agencies and the public during the scoping period, the BLM proposes to amend the following RMP elements:

- Clarifying the existing GRSG RMP goal
- Align GRSG habitat management areas to incorporate new science and improve alignment along state boundaries along with the associated major land use allocations, including management for non-habitat within HMAs
- Adoption of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) definition of "lek" and "lek status"
- Mitigation
- GRSG habitat objectives
- Disturbance caps
- Fluid mineral development and leasing objectives
- Fluid mineral leasing waivers, exceptions, and modifications (WEMs)
- Utility-scale wind and solar energy development
- ROWs
- Minimizing threats from predation
- Livestock grazing
- Wild horse and burro management
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- Adaptive Management

Some management concerns are localized to circumstances in individual states and the ecological diversity across the sagebrush ecosystem. As such, the purpose of this planning effort also includes amending specific RMP management actions associated with state-specific circumstances to facilitate GRSG habitat conservation efforts. Beyond the rangewide considerations detailed above, states considered additional targeted amendments to existing management direction. Each state determined the need to amend management actions independently and based on a review of updated scientific information, changing land uses, and locally relevant habitat variability. Management actions targeted for amendment in some states include saleable minerals, fire and fuels, vegetation and invasives, lands and realty actions, project screening, lek buffers, and interagency coordination. Inclusion of a management category for amendment in one state does not necessitate consideration of this category in other states or the consideration of the category rangewide. See Section 2.5 of the Final EIS, State-Specific Circumstances, for more information.

Section 102 of the FLPMA, as amended, establishes a congressional policy objective that[2] the BLM manage public lands "in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values; that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use." BLM policy further directs the BLM to proactively initiate conservation measures and to minimize or avoid potential adverse effects to prevent decline of sensitive species. Specifically, the BLM's Wildlife and Fisheries Management Manual, M-6500, directs the BLM to "conserve rare, vulnerable, and representative habitats,

[2] This sentence has been updated to more accurately describe Section 102 of the FLPMA. The purpose and need presented in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS read "Section 102 of the FLPMA, as amended, requires the BLM to manage public lands…".

plant communities, and ecosystems," with specific objectives to "develop and implement plans to ensure that the characteristics of rare, threatened, or representative habitat types are maintained," and to "collaborate with other agencies, the States, and private groups to ensure protection of the best representative habitats/ecosystem/plant communities for each area." The BLM's Special Status Species Management Manual, M-6840 (2008), states "the BLM shall designate Bureau sensitive species and implement measures to conserve these species and their habitats...to promote their conservation and reduce the likelihood and need for such species to be listed pursuant to the ESA"[3].

The BLM is therefore amending RMPs to:

- Address continued GRSG habitat losses, which can contribute to GRSG population declines. While GRSG populations experience natural fluctuations, monitoring indicates the most recent nadirs (low point of population cycles) are lower than the prior nadirs in most states. The U.S. Geological Survey[4] (USGS) analyzed state-collected lek data and reported estimated rangewide population declines of nearly 80 percent from 1966-2021 and of 41 percent from 2002-2021. While some GRSG populations are stable to increasing, over 87 percent of areas throughout the range had declining populations since 2002. The quantity and quality of available habitat, as well as non-habitat factors such as disruptive activities and prolonged drought can affect the size and trend of GRSG populations. Analyses of satellite data show sagebrush availability across all land ownerships declined by approximately 3 percent (1.9 million acres) between 2012 and 2018. Nearly 60 percent of the sagebrush losses (approximately 1.1 million acres rangewide) occurred on BLM-administered lands. In the years 2016-2024, over 9.2 million acres[5] in sage-grouse range were burned by wildfire. Wildfire results in the greatest amount of direct habitat loss compared to other threats. This loss of habitat limits GRSG populations to smaller areas from which to obtain the needed habitat characteristics of food and cover. Constraining populations into smaller habitat areas accentuates impacts from other threats, which can then affect population trends. The BLM's 2021 *Greater Sage-Grouse Plan Implementation Rangewide Monitoring Report for 2015-2020*[6] identified 42 population triggers that had been tripped through 2020. Identifying, if possible, and responding to causal factors where population triggers have been tripped is critical to manage habitat to support state population objectives. In addition, habitat triggers were tripped sixteen times, attributable to sagebrush loss due to wildfires. The Monitoring Report also estimated habitat loss of less than one percent in GRSG priority habitat management areas (PHMA) rangewide due to anthropogenic disturbance, although losses due to wildfire were more extensive. The anthropogenic loss on BLM lands is less than what

[3] The September 2024 revisions to Special Status Species Management Manual M-6840 were rescinded in December 2025.. The associated quoted policy direction was therefore updated to reflect the language from the 2008 Manual. The intent of this statement, that it is BLM policy to minimize the need for listing under the ESA, has not changed.

[4] Coates, P.S., Prochazka, B.G., Aldridge, C.L., O'Donnell, M.S., Edmunds, D.R., Monroe, A.P., Hanser, S.E., Wiechman, L.A., and Chenaille, M.P., 2023, Rangewide population trend analysis for greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)—Updated 1960–2022: U.S. Geological Survey Data Report 1175, 17 p., https://doi.org/10.3133/dr1175.

[5] Total acres across the range of GRSG, including the Bi-State and Columbia Basin populations that are not included in this planning effort. Acres include all burned areas within the sage-grouse range maps, not limited to the RMP identified habitat management areas or just areas of sagebrush and sagebrush associated habitats. Acres are also inclusive of all ownerships, not just BLM-administered lands.

[6] Herren, V., E. Kachergis, A. Titolo, K. Mayne, S. Glazer, K. Lambert, B. Newman, and B. Franey. 2021. Greater sage-grouse plan implementation: Rangewide monitoring report for 2015–2020. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Denver, CO.

scientific literature has identified as the threshold where GRSG abandon leks (Kirol et al. 2020). Disturbance from infrastructure in General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA) and other state-specific habitat management area designations averaged approximately 1.58 percent. To help address the continued losses of and impacts to habitat, the BLM proactively conducted sagebrush vegetation treatments on over 5.8 million acres[7] from 2016-2024. These included conifer removal, installation of fuel breaks, invasive species removal, habitat restoration, riparian restoration, and habitat protection.

- Ensure habitat management areas and associated decisions incorporate recent relevant science to prioritize management where it will provide conservation benefit and durability when considering the effects of extreme weather conditions. Since the 2015 and 2019 planning efforts, hundreds of peer-reviewed scientific publications on GRSG and management of their habitats have been published. Some of these new publications are consistent with science the BLM previously considered while others identify new information. Several provide new spatial information on important population and habitat parameters for GRSG. USGS compiled and summarized peer-reviewed journal articles, data products, and formal technical reports related to GRSG since January 2015 (Teige et al. 2023). The BLM considered this new information and relevant science in developing and analyzing proposed management on BLM-administered lands.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS and the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS considered a range of alternatives designed to meet the BLM's purpose and need to respond to updated scientific information and changing land uses and provide for consistent and effective rangewide GRSG conservation based on biological information that is responsive to locally relevant habitat variability (refer to **Purpose and Need**). The Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS analyzed six alternatives. The Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS analyzed those same alternatives along with a seventh alternative, the Proposed RMP Amendment, which was developed using elements from the other alternatives and in response to public and cooperating agency comments on the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS.

The Proposed RMP Amendment alternative in the Final EIS was within the range of the alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIS and did not represent new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns bearing on the proposed action or its impacts, could have been reasonably anticipated for consideration by the public, and was responsive to public and cooperating agency feedback received on the Draft RMP Amendment/ Draft EIS. Therefore, the BLM determined that adding the Proposed RMP Amendment between the Draft EIS and Final EIS did not necessitate supplementation.

Following is a summary of the alternatives analyzed in the Final EIS. Section 2.3, Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS describes alternatives that were considered but not analyzed in detail.

Alternative 1 (Applicable Decisions from the 2015 Approved RMP Amendment)

Alternative 1 included the applicable decisions from the 2015 Approved RMP Amendments that are proposed for amendment under this planning effort. Due to the U.S. District Court of Idaho's preliminary injunction preventing implementation of the 2019 Approved RMP Amendments (refer to explanation in

[7] Acres include areas of treatment funded by the BLM. While these are largely on BLM-administered lands, funding often is used on non-BLM-administered lands adjacent to treatments on BLM-administered lands. In addition, these acres may include double-counting different treatments on the same acres (e.g., conifer removal, followed by seeding counts as two different types of treatments that may occur on the same acres).

Alternative 2 summary below) the BLM is currently implementing the 2015 Approved RMP Amendment. This includes designation of some areas of PHMA as Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFA) with a recommendation to withdraw them from location and entry under the Mining Law of 1872. Additionally, each project resulting in disruption to or loss of GRSG habitat must be mitigated to provide a net conservation gain, which would require use of compensatory mitigation.

For BLM Idaho, Alternative 1 included some variations from the rangewide decisions for saleable minerals.

Alternative 2 – No Action (Applicable Decisions from the 2019 Approved RMP Amendment)

Alternative 2 is the No-Action Alternative and includes the applicable decisions from the 2019 GRSG RODs/Approved RMP Amendments. This is the No Action because it reflects the management language currently in the BLM's approved land use plans. The U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho has issued a preliminarily injunction preventing the BLM from implementing the 2019 RMP Amendments, but not vacating them or their RODs. Because the 2019 RODs/Approved RMP Amendments were not vacated, they are the existing approved management plans. Under this alternative the BLM would apply the management from the 2019 Approved RMP Amendments. SFAs would be removed from the BLM RMPs in all states except Oregon and Montana; these areas would still be managed with all the protections of PHMA but would no longer include a recommendation for withdrawal (including in the Oregon SFAs). For projects that result in disruption to or loss of GRSG habitat, projects would be managed to minimize or eliminate threats to GRSG, or to improve the condition of GRSG habitat across the planning area, only requiring compensatory mitigation if required by the State, federal law, or if volunteered by the proponent. For BLM Idaho, Alternative 2 included some variations from the rangewide management direction for saleable minerals, lek buffers, and habitat indicators and benchmarks.

Alternative 3

Alternative 3 provides the most protective measures to preserve GRSG and its habitat of the alternatives analyzed. Alternative 3 would update the HMA boundaries based on new information and science that has become available since the 2015 and 2019 planning efforts. All HMAs would be managed as PHMA. The BLM would close PHMA to new fluid mineral leasing, saleable minerals/mineral materials permits, and nonenergy leasable minerals leasing (development associated with existing permits and leases would not be precluded). PHMA would be recommended for withdrawal from location and entry under the Mining Law of 1872 and unavailable for livestock grazing. PHMA would also be ROW exclusion areas. Where there are currently designated wild horse and burro herd management areas overlapping PHMA, the wild horse and burro herd management area would become a Herd Area that is not managed for wild horses and burros. Under Alternative 3, the BLM would designate 32 GRSG habitat ACECs.

For BLM Idaho, Alternative 3 Included 1,689,386 acres of ACECs and included some variations from the rangewide management direction for saleable minerals, utility-scale wind and solar energy, and lek buffers.

Alternative 4

Alternative 4 would update the HMA boundaries and associated management based on new information and science that became available since the 2015 and 2019 efforts. While many of the allocations would be similar to Alternatives 1 and 2, the habitat management areas are updated to reflect new science. In addition, management associated with some of the major minimization measures (e.g., disturbance cap and adaptive management) is adjusted to address cross-boundary coordination of shared populations, rangewide biological and managerial concerns based on monitoring, and experience gained from implementing

management for GRSG since 2015. Alternative 4 allowed compensatory mitigation to be used under specific conditions. Additional compensatory mitigation may be required where habitat and/or population adaptive management thresholds have been met. Areas previously identified as SFAs are generally managed as PHMA. The primary difference between management of SFAs in the 2015 Plans and PHMAs in this planning effort is that PHMA would not include a recommendation for withdrawal or prioritization strategies for oil and gas leasing and grazing permit renewals. For projects resulting in disruption to or loss of GRSG habitat, they would be managed to at least achieve no net loss of GRSG habitat, which could include compensatory mitigation.

For BLM Idaho, Alternative 4 included some variations from the rangewide management direction for saleable minerals, utility-scale wind and solar energy, and lek buffers.

Alternative 5

Alternative 5 was identified as the preferred alternative in the Draft EIS. Alternative 5 considers other potential alignments of HMAs and associated management to try to balance GRSG conservation with public land uses. If state governments updated the GRSG management area boundaries in their specific state plans, the BLM considered those boundaries on public lands in Alternative 5. HMAs are similar to but refined from Alternative 4 and restrictions would generally be similar to Alternative 4. Alternative 5 considered options with fewer restrictions on resource uses and provided more opportunities for considering compensatory mitigation to offset impacts on GRSG and its habitat than Alternative 4. Areas previously identified as SFAs are generally managed as PHMA. The primary difference between management of SFAs in the 2015 Plans and PHMAs in this planning effort is that PHMA would not include a recommendation for withdrawal or prioritization strategies for oil and gas leasing and grazing permit renewals. For projects resulting in disruption to or loss of GRSG habitat, similar to Alternative 4, they would be managed to at least achieve no net loss of GRSG habitat, which could include compensatory mitigation, but there would be more flexibility to when and how compensatory mitigation would be conducted.

For BLM Idaho, Alternative 5 included some variations from the rangewide management direction for saleable minerals, utility-scale wind and solar energy, and lek buffers with buffer distances similar to Alternative 2 and in the 2021 Idaho Sage-grouse Management Plan (Executive Order 2022-03).

Alternative 6

Under Alternative 6, management for all habitat management areas and the resource topics being considered in the range of alternatives would be the same as described for Alternative 5 except that under Alternative 6, 32 ACECs are proposed for designation. The same ACECs proposed for designation under Alternative 3 would be considered but the management direction for these areas would be less restrictive compared to Alternative 3.

For BLM Idaho, Alternative 6 included 1,689,386 acres of ACECs and some variations from the rangewide management direction for saleable minerals, utility-scale wind and solar energy, and lek buffers.

Proposed RMP Amendment

The Final EIS Proposed RMP Amendment increased protection for GRSG and its habitat from the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 5). The Proposed RMP Amendment identified PHMA as exclusion for utility-scale solar and wind and open subject to NSO for fluid minerals with exceptions. PHMA remained an avoidance area for major ROWs but the exceptions for allowing development are more restrictive. Since the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS, the BLM increased protections in PHMA by adding additional detail on the processes for voluntary compensatory mitigation; site-scale assessments; adaptive management;

and fluid minerals WEMs to promote rangewide consistency and ensure proper tracking. Areas within PHMA requiring additional protections were also identified. Within these areas referred to as PHMA with limited exceptions, there were no exceptions to the solar and wind exclusion allocation or for the NSO allocation for fluid minerals. PHMA with limited exceptions were also exclusion areas for major ROWs with exceptions. These additional protections in the Proposed RMP Amendment were designed to provide the necessary protections for GRSG and its habitat in light of anticipated development threats and negative impacts from extreme weather conditions such as drought.

For BLM Idaho, the Proposed RMP Amendment included some variations from the rangewide management direction to incorporate allocations and decisions for the 3-tier HMA categories in Idaho, specifically Important Habitat Management Areas (IHMA), for fluid minerals, livestock grazing, predation, wild horse and burro, mitigation, disturbance cap, adaptive management and habitat objectives direction. In addition, Idaho had some variations from the rangewide decisions for fluid minerals, which largely consists of geothermal development. For saleable minerals, the Proposed RMP Amendment provides opportunities for counties to develop new free use pits in order to maintain county roads and ensure public safety, while minimizing impacts to GRSG and its habitat. In addition, the Proposed RMP Amendment updates several management decisions for consistency with other parts of the Proposed RMP Amendment, including other types of energy development, i.e., nuclear and hydropower energy development, Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Development Criteria, the interagency GRSG Implementation Team, and application of RDFs and buffers.

RATIONALE FOR DECISION

The Approved RMP Amendment for Idaho provides a set of management directions that best meets the BLM's purpose of addressing updated scientific information and changing land uses, including information and uses not considered or addressed in the BLM's 2015 and 2019 amendments, while providing for consistent and effective rangewide GRSG conservation that is responsive to locally relevant habitat variability. The Approved RMP Amendment also best meets the need to address GRSG habitat loss, and the BLM believes this management approach is better than previous management. While GRSG populations experience natural fluctuations, monitoring indicates the most recent nadirs (low point of population cycles) are lower than the prior nadirs in most states. The BLM manages approximately half of the remaining GRSG habitats and between 2015 and 2020 nearly 60 percent (1.1 million acres) of all sagebrush losses (approximately 1.9 million acres rangewide) occurred on BLM-administered lands as a result of wildfire. In Idaho, over half of the remaining GRSG habitats are on BLM-administered lands. The Approved RMP Amendment addresses this issue and provides new management that allows for the conservation of GRSG habitat while balancing the BLM's ability to manage public lands for other uses in accordance with FLPMA. The Approved RMP Amendment responds to statute, regulations, and national policy, including Section 102 of FLPMA, BLM's Wildlife and Fisheries Management Manual, M-6500 and BLM's Special Status Species Management Manual, M-6840; Idaho-specific habitat conditions and threats; and Idaho state government GRSG policies and management priorities described in Executive Order 2022-03, including the 2021 Idaho Sage-grouse Management Plan and Idaho Sage-Steppe Mitigation Principles. The Approved RMP Amendment reflects the high degree of collaboration and input received from the cooperating federal, state, and local governments; the feedback received from Tribal governments; and from the over 39,000 public comments received on the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS. The Approved RMP Amendment provides the necessary protection for GRSG habitat in light of anticipated development threats and negative impacts from extreme weather conditions while also ensuring an appropriate balance of public land uses. For all the reasons included in this decision, the BLM believes the management approach in the Approved RMPA is better than the previous management set forth in the 2015 and 2019 amendments that is being amended.

Following, in more detail, are the ways in which the key components of the Approved RMP Amendment incorporate updated science and changing land uses, reduce habitat loss on BLM-administered lands, and incorporate feedback from Tribal, federal, state and local governments, and the public in an effort to develop a plan that has durability across the GRSG range while responding to the specific habitat, development threats, and public land uses in the Idaho planning area.

Habitat Management Areas

The Approved RMP Amendment will reduce habitat loss on BLM-administered lands by identifying updated HMAs where GRSG habitat conservation measures will be implemented in areas where it will provide the greatest conservation value for this species. These updated HMAs respond to updated monitoring and scientific data (e.g., Coates et al. 2021; Cross et al. 2018; Cross et al. 2022; Doherty et al. 2016; Oyler-McCance et al. 2022; Row et al. 2018; Palmquist et al. 2021; Rigge et al. 2021) and reflect the input of the federal and state land management and wildlife management agencies across the ten-state planning area, including IDFG and the Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation. Within these habitat management areas, updated management direction to conserve GRSG habitat will be applied to: utility-scale solar and wind development; fluid, saleable, non-energy leasable mineral development; major and minor ROW development; livestock grazing; wild horse and burros; predation; mitigation; disturbance cap; adaptive management; criteria-based management for non-habitat; and updated habitat objectives and lek definitions. Additionally, Idaho is updating management direction for: saleable minerals, nuclear and hydropower energy development, Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening Criteria, GRSG Implementation Team, and the application of RDFs and lek buffers.

The Approved RMP Amendment identifies three habitat management areas in Idaho: Priority Habitat Management Areas[8] (PHMA), Important Habitat Management Areas (IHMA), and General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA), that respond to local habitat priorities. PHMAs have the highest value for maintaining sustainable GRSG populations and can include breeding, late brood-rearing, winter concentration areas, and migration or connectivity corridors. IHMA are lands with moderate to high conservation value for GRSG populations and often connect patches of PHMA or provide a management buffer for PHMA. GHMAs are lands that are or have the potential to become occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of PHMA and are managed to sustain GRSG populations.

The PHMA, IHMA, and GHMAs were identified using updated data and science on GRSG use (telemetry, lek data), habitats (IDFGs 2019 Habitat Suitability Index Models for GRSG); remote sensing data for sagebrush, tree, and annual grass cover; fire history; and rangewide science such as breeding bird density. Updates to HMA extent and categories were done in coordination with the State of Idaho, including IDFG, the Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation, and other cooperating agencies. HMA categories were primarily based on categorization from the State of Idaho (see Appendix 3 of the Final EIS for details) where PHMA encompassed the best habitats in terms of breeding bird density, and large areas of intact habitats, as well as important connectivity or seasonal habitats. IHMA was slightly lower quality and/or more fragmented habitat, with lower breeding bird density and GHMA encompassed more marginal habitat outside of PHMA and IHMA and with more limited GRSG use.

[8] As described in the **Changes and Clarifications** section below, in the Proposed RMP Amendment, the BLM identified areas within PHMA that would receive increased protections to support conservation of GRSG habitat by reducing impacts from highly probable resource threats, referred to as PHMA with limited exceptions. This distinct management approach is not included in the Approved RMP Amendment; these areas are all identified solely as PHMA.

The Approved RMP Amendment retains approximately 50,000 acres as IHMA instead of GHMA under Alternative 5 in order to protect two important connectivity areas between PHMA patches, as demonstrated from telemetry locations.

The identified HMA boundaries reflect updated habitat information that are based on monitoring data and updated scientific literature and the input and collaboration on the identification of boundaries with the State of Idaho (refer to Map 3).

In Idaho, there are 4,591,000 acres of PHMA, 2,524,000 acres of IHMA, and 1,696,000 acres of GHMA on BLM lands (see **Table 1** in the Approved RMP Amendment). These habitat management areas form the cornerstone of focusing BLM's GRSG conservation efforts in the areas where they will be the most beneficial and effective.

Allocations and Management Direction

In identifying the management allocations and direction that would apply in the PHMA, IHMA, and GHMA to meet the purpose and need, the BLM considered the effects of the alternatives identified in the Draft EIS (Chapter 4 in the Draft EIS) and the feedback received from the public, cooperating agencies, and Tribal governments on the Draft EIS. In response to the feedback received and to improve alignment with Federal policies, the BLM felt it was necessary to increase protections for GRSG, particularly in PHMA, from those identified in BLM's preferred alternative (Alternative 5), in the Draft EIS. In particular, the USFWS expressed concern that the conservation measures identified in Alternative 5 in the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS did not provide sufficient GRSG habitat protections. In 2010, the USFWS determined that listing the GRSG under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) was "warranted but precluded" by other priorities. However, in 2015, new information about the status of the species, potential threats, regulatory mechanisms, and conservation efforts led the USFWS to determine the species was not warranted for listing. In response to USFWS feedback in the Draft EIS, the BLM increased protective measures, particularly in PHMA, in accordance with BLM's Special Status Species Manual, M-6840, which directs the BLM to "emphasize proactive conservation for BLM sensitive species to help ensure these species do not need to be listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA." Specifically, the BLM's Approved RMP Amendment increases protections in PHMA allocations and management direction from the Preferred Alternative identified in the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS by:

- changing the utility-scale solar and wind allocations from avoidance to exclusion with specific exception criteria for potential ancillary solar developments;
- expanding the definition of major ROWS to include transmission line and distribution pipeline ROWs, increasing restrictions for exceptions allowing development, and ensuring that any new major ROWs are subject to Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Development Criteria;
- before granting exceptions to the disturbance cap, the exception must receive BLM State Director concurrence, exceptions must be tracked, and conditions for voluntary mitigation must be met;
- updating habitat objectives to require the identification of multiple lines of evidence to determine overall habitat suitability when completing site-scale assessments;
- more explicitly defining habitat inputs for adaptive management direction and clarifying the coordination that will occur with state wildlife agencies; and
- clarifying the fluid minerals WEMs management direction to promote rangewide consistency and ensure proper tracking of WEMs.

The Proposed RMP Amendment in the Final EIS, which is the Approved RMP Amendment in this decision (with minor clarifications as noted in the **Clarifications** section), incorporates management direction approaches from all of the alternatives analyzed in the Draft RMP Amendment / EIS and provides the appropriate suite of management direction to conserve GRSG habitat. The allocations and management direction are designed to minimize surface disturbance while addressing habitat needs and development threats and public land uses in Idaho thereby promoting conservation of habitat in a manner that allows for public land uses where possible and appropriate in accordance with BLM's multiple use and sustained yield mission. Chapter 4 of the Final EIS details the Approved RMP Amendment's potential impact on GRSG.

The following is a description of the management allocations and direction that achieve these objectives.

Habitat Management

The Approved RMP Amendment clarifies habitat management objectives and makes them consistent across the GRSG range and provides associated management direction that guides a consistent approach to promote the long-term durability of BLM's conservation efforts. The updated objectives identify what constitutes suitable habitat and addresses seasonal habitats, dispersal, and migration; and the need to limit habitat disturbance and fragmentation. The updated objectives identify the scale at which the different habitat components must be maintained. Compared to the 2015 and 2019 habitat objectives, the updated objectives acknowledge that habitat characteristics vary based on spatial scale, and that the conditions that characterize suitable habitat at the site scale vary based on ecological conditions throughout the range. Management direction provides methods for assessing habitat suitability through the use of Habitat Assessment Framework (HAF) assessments and the use of the updated Habitat Indicator Tables to improve and restore habitat. However, specific vegetation conditions that characterize suitable habitat are moved from the objective itself and are instead summarized from the best available and locally applicable literature in the Habitat Indicator Tables. The Habitat Indicators Table for Idaho was updated for perennial grass height due to utilize the best available science, and will continue to be reviewed to incorporate the best available science in coordination with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal agencies. The values provided in the Appendix 4 Habitat Indicators Table, as updated, will be used for future HAF assessments. Updated management direction for habitat objectives also requires the identification of multiple lines of evidence to determine overall habitat suitability when completing site-scale assessments. These objectives and management direction respond to updated science and feedback received from cooperating agencies, including the USFWS and the State of Idaho, including the IDFG and the Governor's Office of Species Conservation, and BLM's implementation experience.

Solar, Wind, Fluid Mineral, Nuclear, Hydroenergy, and Major ROWs

PHMA are exclusion areas for utility-scale solar and wind energy and there is a no surface occupancy (NSO) allocation for fluid minerals. Exceptions to solar (as an ancillary feature to other approved uses) and fluid mineral development can be made if specified criteria can be met. WEMs are possible under certain conditions. Exceptions to the NSO allocation will be analyzed in terms of 3.1-mile buffers around active or pending active leks. PHMA is an avoidance area for major ROWs where development would be avoided unless a few site-specific conditions could be demonstrated for when development could be allowed. Any exceptions in PHMA must also meet the Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Development Criteria. IHMA is an avoidance area for utility-scale solar and wind development as well as for major ROWs, subject to Anthropogenic Disturbance Development Criteria. Similar to PHMA, IHMA is also a NSO allocation for fluid minerals, with the same WEMs as in PHMA. GHMA are open for other major developments subject to minimization measures.

For nuclear and hydropower energy development, PHMA are exclusion areas, IHMA are avoidance areas, and GHMA is open. Development would be subject to minimization measures, including Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Development Criteria, RDFs, and buffers around active or pending active leks.

These allocations respond to concerns raised regarding the threats associated with these uses (habitat loss, habitat avoidance, disturbance), particularly in PHMA, while also ensuring that where feasible these uses can be allowed. The direction for nuclear and hydropower energy development was identified in response to cooperating agency and public feedback, updated scientific data, and builds on and clarifies how these management directions will be implemented in a manner that conserves GRSG habitat.

In addition to the changes in fluid mineral allocations and WEMs, the over-arching fluid mineral objective no longer requires prioritization outside of PHMA, IHMA, and GHMA. Appendix C in the BLM's planning handbook (BLM-1601-1) identifies land use planning decisions for fluid minerals. A land use plan is to identify, "consistent with the goals and objectives for natural resources," areas that are 1) open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form; 2) open to leasing subject to moderate constraints such as seasonal and controlled use restrictions; 3) open to leasing subject to major constraints such as no-surface-occupancy (NSO); 4) closed to leasing. The handbook also notes, similar to language from the Energy Policy Act of 2005, that "when applying leasing restrictions, the least restrictive constraint to meet the resource protection objective should be used" (BLM-1601-1 Appendix C page 24). The combination of open to leasing subject to NSO stipulation and the prioritization objective created a situation that has been confusing to the public over whether PHMA is open to leasing or not, and with what stipulations. Additionally, the planning handbook describes how an implementation strategy—not the RMP itself—is the appropriate tool for the BLM to prioritize RMP decisions to help achieve desired outcomes, taking into account the availability of existing or anticipated staff and budget resources. Therefore removing the prioritization process from the RMP aligns with current BLM planning guidance. This approach is also consistent with recent amendments to the Mineral Leasing Act through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (P.L. 119-21, Sec. 50101) ("OBBBA"), which limit the BLM's discretion for leasing parcels nominated in expressions of interest. Section 50101(d) of the OBBBA directs the BLM, acting on behalf of the Secretary, to make parcels known or believed to contain oil or gas deposits available for leasing "not later than 18 months" after receipt of an expression of interest, provided that the BLM "determines that the parcel of land is open to oil and gas leasing under the approved resource management plan applicable to the planning area in which the parcel of land is located that is in effect on the date on which the expression of interest was submitted." Retaining the prioritization process following enactment of section 50101(d) would potentially confuse the public and, for parcels nominated in expressions of interest, would likely be inconsistent or in tension with this new statutory direction. Finally, the analysis in the FEIS shows that prioritization is unnecessary for the BLM to provide sufficient protection for greater sage-grouse. The prioritization process provides no certain or durable protection to PHMA, and the BLM is retaining the stipulations associated with surface occupancy and disturbance cap.

Moreover, not including specific leasing prioritization language or a specific leasing strategy in the RMP does not remove the RMP's desired condition to manage public lands for suitable GRSG habitat at the HAF mid-, fine- and site-scales. Fluid mineral leasing would be considered in GRSG habitat management areas consistent with the Secretary's discretion to consider leasing or not leasing available public lands under the Mineral Leasing Act (as amended), subject to the limits on that discretion resulting from the amendments to the Mineral Leasing Act through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. If lands are considered for lease, the action and any subsequent development would comply with applicable BLM regulations and policies, and conform to the RMP GRSG goals, objectives, stipulations, and management actions.

Locatable, Nonenergy Leasable, Saleable Minerals and Materials

All HMAs are open to locatable mineral development in accordance with the 1872 Mining Law, unless already withdrawn. Within PHMA, no new nonenergy leasable mineral development is allowed but the expansion of existing operations is allowed. IHMA is open to nonenergy leasable mineral development in Known Phosphate Leasing Areas (KPLAs), subject to RDFs and buffers; and outside KPLAs, subject to disturbance thresholds, RDFs, and buffers. GHMA is open to nonenergy leasable mineral development with the application of state-specific minimization measures.

PHMA is closed for saleable mineral development but open for new free use permits and the expansion of existing pits with specified criteria to minimize habitat fragmentation and disturbance in PHMA. IHMA is open for saleable mineral development. New and expansion of free use permits in PHMA and IHMA would be exempt from Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Disturbance Criteria in order to support maintenance needs for existing local roads and ensure public safety. GHMA is open for saleable mineral development. Minimization measures, including RDFs and buffers, would apply to all saleable mineral development.

This mineral management direction responds to state-specific circumstances related to saleable minerals (gravel) and fluid minerals, and input received from cooperating agencies and the public. The direction will reduce habitat loss or disturbance in PHMA habitat while allowing use with the application of appropriate minimization measures in PHMA, IHMA, and GHMA, thereby balancing necessary GRSG protections with public land use.

Livestock Grazing

The Approved RMP Amendment provides management direction for livestock grazing to promote GRSG habitat conservation when applying existing BLM policies and approaches for livestock grazing. Specifically, the livestock grazing direction provides an objective to manage livestock grazing in a manner that meets or makes progress toward meeting the Land Health Standard (LHS) for special status species (SSS) and applies guidelines that address restoring or enhancing GRSG habitat. This provides the tools to manage livestock grazing in a fashion consistent with healthy sagebrush systems, which in turn provide suitable habitat for GRSG. For example, the use of targeted grazing to manage fuel loads and fuel continuity is an example of using livestock to protect valuable habitat. The management direction in the Approved RMP Amendment calls for considering GRSG when developing allotment management plans (or the functional equivalent) and other similar implementation planning that is done to meet or make progress toward BLM's LHS. This includes considering the vegetation needs of GRSG and ways of implementing range improvements such as fencing in a manner that is least impactful to GRSG. When fully processing grazing authorizations in PHMA where livestock grazing is found to be a significant causal factor in not meeting the SSS standard, the NEPA analysis will include an alternative that identifies specific thresholds and responses to maintain or move PHMA toward providing suitable GRSG habitat. The Approved RMP Amendment also provides a suite of GRSG specific design features and best management practices for consideration and use when conducting livestock grazing (refer to **Appendix 5**, Livestock Grazing Management Best Management Practices and Design Features).

The livestock grazing management direction was identified in response to cooperating agency and public feedback, updated scientific and monitoring data, and builds on and clarifies how the existing management direction for livestock grazing will continue to be implemented in a manner that conserves GRSG habitat.

Wild Horse and Burro Management

The Approved RMP Amendment provides management direction on wild horse and burro management that provides additional, specific direction regarding how to promote GRSG habitat conservation when applying the existing BLM policies and approaches for wild horse and burro management. Specifically, the management direction for wild horses and burros seeks to address areas within GRSG habitat where horses are a significant causal factor in not meeting LHS. Scientific literature has found that managing wild horses and burros at or below appropriate management levels minimizes negative impacts on GRSG population trends (Coates et al. 2021a; Beck et al. 2024). Where GRSG habitat overlaps with wild horse and burro ranges, the Approved RMP Amendment calls for managing wild horse and burro populations within established appropriate management levels and to achieve or make significant progress toward achieving LHS. The management direction also directs the prioritization of wild horse gathers in PHMA unless removals are necessary in other areas to address higher priority issues, including herd health impacts.

The wild horse and burro direction was identified in response to cooperating agency and public feedback, updated scientific and monitoring data, and builds on and clarifies how the existing management direction for wild horse and burros will be implemented in manner that conserves GRSG habitat.

Mitigation, Disturbance Cap, Predation, Adaptive Management

As part of the comprehensive approach to promoting GRSG conservation, the Approved RMP Amendment also updates the BLM's GRSG mitigation, disturbance cap, and adaptive management processes. These updates are responsive to public and cooperating agency feedback, changes in BLM policies, and experience the BLM has gained implementing these programs. For example, the BLM has learned that mitigation is most effective when it can be applied where the habitat and population impacts are occurring and has found the results of calculating the disturbance cap at the HAF fine-scale to be the most useful scale of analysis. For these same reasons, the Approved RMP Amendment also creates new management direction that addresses the predation risks associated with disturbance activities in GRSG habitat.

The mitigation direction in the Approved RMP Amendment adopts the mitigation language from Alternative 2, focusing on avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, and reducing GRSG impacts, but only considering compensatory mitigation when voluntarily offered by a proponent, required by a law other than FLPMA, or to meet a state recommendation or requirement. The Approved RMP Amendment does update the mitigation language from Alternative 2 to reflect policy changes and actions that have been fulfilled since the 2019 ROD/Approved RMP Amendment. This change from the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS is to align more closely with BLM's statutory authority. This results in working with the states to maintain existing habitat as the initial approach to GRSG habitat management, then working closely with state plans and authorities to address the potential for compensation. The Approved RMP Amendment retains the entire breadth of mitigation tools to be implemented through conformance with the RMP, applicable statutes, and consistent with state plans and policies. Prior to granting fluid mineral exception number 2 or an exception to the disturbance cap, the criteria noted in the RMP related to compensatory mitigation voluntarily offered by the proponent would need to be documented, including the need to benefit the affected populations; these clarifications were made in response to cooperating agency feedback, BLM's experience implementing mitigation, and updated policies and science (e.g., Coates et al. 2021b). Adopting this mitigation strategy more closely aligns with the BLM's mitigation authorities, FLPMA requirements for consistency with state plans, and reflects the primary mitigation approach of avoiding and minimizing impacts through application of RMP allocations.

Recognizing the significant threat to GRSG that occurs from habitat disturbance, the Approved RMP Amendment updates the disturbance cap direction and sets a 3% cap at the project scale and 3% at the HAF fine-scale within PHMA or IHMA. When these disturbance caps are met, new infrastructure projects would be deferred to the extent allowable under applicable laws or valid existing rights. This means that the BLM would not apply the disturbance cap in a manner that would interfere with any valid existing rights. The Approved RMP Amendment directs how the disturbance cap calculation will be done and identifies disturbance cap exceptions and related criteria.

If during ongoing BLM and IDFG monitoring it is found that unanticipated effects to GRSG are occurring, despite the ongoing implementation of GRSG management direction, this amendment provides a method for BLM to address those impacts in PHMA and IHMA before they become severe or irreversible through adaptive management. The adaptive management direction is based on updated science examining population trend anomalies (Coates et al. 2021) and was developed with significant feedback from cooperating agencies, including the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The adaptive management direction identifies thresholds and responses and a process for coordinating with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to reduce and reverse impacts to GRSG and GRSG habitat. The BLM is retaining threshold limits for habitat loss or modification, although at a scale that is more meaningful to local populations. During implementation, BLM will develop or renew Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs; see MD SSS 44) with interagency teams to coordinate with state authorities for use of best available science, selection of analysis units, population status updates, identification of threshold activation, identification of causal factors, and determination of appropriate responses.

The Approved RMP Amendment also addresses the secondary impact to GRSG from predation when habitat disturbance occurs (USFWS 2023). The management direction for predation responds to public and cooperating agency feedback that the BLM needed to address this topic as part of this amendment effort. The Approved RMP Amendment requires the application of minimization measures to new and existing projects to minimize threats from predators that pose a threat to GRSG consistent with applicable law. In PHMA or IHMA in new, expanded, or renewal of existing energy or transmission related energy, mining and infrastructure projects, the project proponent is required to submit a predator subsidy management plan to minimize habitat loss and associated influx and support of new predators as a result of the new project. The predator direction will help the BLM ensure that where projects have the potential to negatively impact GRSG, that appropriate design features and mitigation measures are put in place. The BLM does not have authority over predator control, however, the BLM will continue to cooperate with other agencies should direct predator control be necessary.

The Approved RMP Amendment for mitigation, disturbance cap, predation, and adaptive management provides BLM with a comprehensive suite of tools to ensure that GRSG conservation measures are effective, and BLM is able to be responsive to anticipated threats as well as unanticipated impacts.

Special Status Species Management

Special Status Species management direction was updated to align with other portions of the Approved RMP Amendment, including Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Development Criteria, application of RDFs from the 2015 RMP Amendment, and clarified lek buffers with buffer distances from the 2015 RMP Amendment. In addition, the role of the interagency Idaho GRSG Implementation Team was updated to reflect existing policy.

The direction for SSS management, RDFs, lek buffers, and the Idaho Implementation Team was identified in response to cooperating agency and public feedback, updated scientific data, and builds on and clarifies how these management directions will be implemented in a manner that conserves GRSG habitat.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

In Idaho, the BLM considered 4[9] areas for potential designation as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for GRSG habitat. These areas were first identified through both external nominations and internal rangewide and state-specific review processes that were subsequently thoroughly evaluated by BLM experts to determine if they met the ACEC relevance and importance criteria identified in 43 CFR 1610.7-2 (3)(i)and(ii). Appendix 5, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern for Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat, in the Final EIS contains information on the nomination and evaluation process. With input from cooperating agencies and the public, BLM identified the following four areas as meeting the relevance and importance criteria and included them, in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.7-2 (g) under Alternative 3 and Alternative 6 in the Final EIS as potential ACECs:

ACEC considered	Acres
Owyhee	653,199 acres
Shoshone Basin	244,935 acres
Camas-Laidlaw	457,724 acres
Big Desert	333,528 acres
Total	**1,689,386 acres**

To be designated as an ACEC, in addition to meeting the relevance and importance criteria, an area must also meet the special management attention criterion which is identified in 43 CFR 1610.7-2:

> ***(3) Special management attention.*** *The important historic, cultural, or scenic values; fish or wildlife resources; natural systems or processes; or natural hazards potentially impacting life and safety require special management attention. "Special management attention" means management prescriptions that:*
>
> > ***(i)*** *Protect and prevent irreparable damage to the relevant and important values, or that protect life and safety from natural hazards; and*
> >
> > ***(ii)*** *Would not be prescribed if the relevant and important values were not present. In this context, "irreparable damage" means harm to a value, resource, system, or process that substantially diminishes the relevance or importance of that value, resource, system, or process in such a way that recovery of the value, resource, system, or process to the extent necessary to restore its prior relevance or importance is impossible.*

In the Proposed RMP Amendment, in compliance with 43 CFR 1610.7-2, the BLM has evaluated the areas found to have relevance and importance and proposed them for ACEC designation in Alternatives 3 and 6. The BLM has also analyzed the effects of the management direction to these potential ACEC areas under all of the alternatives, including the Proposed RMP Amendment identified in this decision, which changes and clarifications (refer to **Changes and Clarification** section) as the Approved RMP Amendment. Appendix 5 in the FEIS contains the effects analysis. The effects analysis provides the information needed to determine

[9] Four areas (the 92,000-acre Triangle, 39,230-acre Antelope, 336,009-acre Mountain Valley Complex, and 247,491-acre Upper Snake Complex areas) were additionally identified in the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS but were removed from consideration in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS after further analysis. See Appendix 5 of the Final EIS for additional information.

if special management attention is needed to protect and prevent irreparable damage to the relevant and important values identified for the areas.

To determine whether special management attention through ACEC designation is appropriate for these areas, the BLM considered a range of management direction that included two alternatives (Alternatives 3 and 6) that would designate the areas as ACECs and establish associated management direction, and five alternatives (Alternatives 1, 2, 4, 5, and the Proposed RMP Amendment) that would not designate these areas as ACECs. In Alternatives 3 and 6, the BLM considered different management strategies for the ACECs under consideration, with Alternative 3 generally providing the highest level of restrictions on development and other land uses and Alternative 6 providing a high level of restrictions but allowing for slightly more opportunities for use (See FEIS Appendix 5, Table 5-2 for more detail). The BLM analyzed the potential effects to the relevant and important values of the GRSG habitat under all these alternatives.

The Approved RMP Amendment does not designate any ACECs. Under the Approved RMP Amendment, the 635,199-acre Owyhee, 244,935-acre Shoshone Basin, 475,724-acre Camas-Laidlaw, and 333,528-acre Big Desert proposed ACEC areas will all be managed as PHMA. As PHMA, these areas will be managed as exclusion for utility-scale solar, utility scale-wind, nuclear and hydropower energy development, and closed to saleable minerals/material management and non-energy leasable mineral development, with exceptions, and avoidance for major ROWs. Further, new fluid mineral leasing in these areas will be subject to NSO stipulations, with WEMs. These restrictions to potential development will provide protections to the relevant and important values of the areas nominated as ACECs. Any projects approved under the exceptions to these protections (particularly for non-energy leasable mineral development, and fluid mineral development)and less-protective allocations (avoidance for major ROWs), would be carefully evaluated during project-specific NEPA. Therefore, these protections from potential development and limited exceptions designed to ensure GRSG habitat is maintained will provide protection to the relevant and important values of areas under the Approved RMP Amendment.

Rationale Conclusion

Considered comprehensively, the habitat management area designations and the allocations and management direction in the Approved RMP Amendment best meet the purpose and need for this planning effort by using updated science and cooperating agency, public feedback, and BLM implementation experience, to provide management direction that, when used in concert with existing GRSG management direction that is not being amended, will be applied where it will be the most effective for conserving GRSG habitat across the species range while being responsive to the habitat variability, threats, and public land uses in the Idaho planning area.

CHANGES AND CLARIFICATIONS MADE BETWEEN PROPOSED RMP AMENDMENT/FINAL EIS AND APPROVED RMP AMENDMENT/ROD

The Approved RMP Amendment for Idaho contains changes since the Proposed RMP Amendment published on November 15, 2024, described below in the "Changes Between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD." Consistent with 43 CFR 1610.2(f)(5) and 1610.5-1(b), significant changes to the proposed management direction published in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS were published for public comment on September 2, 2025, for a 30-day comment period. The BLM carefully reviewed each of the changes to determine if they would result in significant effects outside the range of effects analyzed in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS. The BLM has determined that the analysis described in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS is inclusive of the effects that would occur because of these changed management actions and supplemental analysis under NEPA is not needed. A summary of the

substantive comments received on the proposed changes and the BLM's response can be found in **Appendix 8**, GRSG Rangewide Planning Comment Response.

In addition to the significant changes described below, the BLM also made clarifications and non-significant edits to the text of the Approved RMP Amendment. These changes are described below in the "Clarifications Between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD" section. These clarifications and the minor edits made are neither substantive nor significant and therefore do not require that the BLM provide the public with further opportunity to comment.

Significant Changes made between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD

Two changes were made to the Proposed RMP Amendment for this Approved RMP Amendment. Section 202 of FLPMA and its implementing regulations require the BLM to develop, amend, and revise land use plans to be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent consistent with federal law and the purposes of FLPMA. This planning effort involved extensive coordination and consultation with State representatives, including modifying the RMP Amendment to improve consistency with the Idaho GRSG plan.

The BLM is not including the identification of PHMA with limited exceptions and the associated PHMA with limited exceptions management direction that was identified in the Proposed RMP Amendment in the Approved RMP Amendment. Several states found the identification of PHMA with limited exceptions and the additional protections provided for these areas to be unnecessary, potentially inconsistent with state and local plans, policies, or programs (including concern that this would mean four habitat management area designations instead of three in Idaho), and a primary reason the states could not support the Proposed RMP Amendment. In consideration of the states' concerns and in order to allow the BLM and the states to move forward together, the BLM has removed PHMA with limited exceptions and all associated management direction. The area would be identified as PHMA and would be subject to the management allocations and direction for PHMA (refer to **Table 1** in the Approved RMP Amendment). In Idaho, proposed large projects (e.g. solar/wind energy development, major ROWs) in PHMA would also be subject to Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Development Criteria (MD SSS 29 and 30).

A coordinated management approach between the BLM and the states is paramount to achieving GRSG conservation across its range. As detailed above in the BLM's purpose and need (refer to **Purpose and Need**), consistency with effective rangewide conservation is one of BLM's primary purposes in undertaking this RMP Amendment process. As a result, in the spirit of promoting consistent and coordinated GRSG conservation across its range, in consideration of the increased protection for PHMA included in the Approved RMP as compared to the Draft Preferred Alternative, and due to the requirement to conduct additional NEPA on future projects that would fully analyze impacts to GRSG and its habitat, and consistent with 43 CFR 1610.3-2, the BLM has removed the PHMA with limited exceptions and associated PHMA with limited exceptions management direction from the Approved RMP Amendment.

The BLM modified the adaptive management language in the Approved RMP for Idaho, Montana/Dakotas, Nevada/California, Utah, and Wyoming to improve consistent rangewide adaptive management. The BLM closely coordinated with the Western Governors Association Sage-grouse Conservation Task Force (Task Force) to better align the BLM's adaptive management process with state policies and programs to manage GRSG populations. States expressed a need to clarify how state adaptive management approaches would be incorporated into the BLM's adaptive management process, and several states expressed concern with using

the targeted annual warning system (TAWS) model and a desire to use models maintained and controlled by state wildlife agencies for GRSG population calculations. The BLM worked closely with the Task Force to develop an adaptive management approach that recognizes state governments' authority to manage GRSG populations while remaining consistent with the BLM's adaptive management process in the Oregon and Colorado Approved RMP Amendments. In response to public comments on the "Changes Between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD" published on September 2, 2025, the adaptive management appendix was updated to clarify that activation of habitat thresholds will be verified through the existing CFA process, that routine maintenance and operations of electric utilities is considered an exception to threshold responses, and the that grazing permits may be renewed for the duration of the CFA while a CFA is ongoing. The revised language is included in **Table 1** of the Approved RMP Amendment and **Appendix 6**.

Additional Idaho-specific Significant Changes between the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD for Idaho:

Habitat Indicators: The indicator for perennial grass (and forb) height, including residual grasses, was modified from "≥ 7 inches" to "Suitable nesting cover" in the Approved RMP Amendment. BLM made this change in coordination with the State of Idaho and in response to the Governor's Consistency Review and recent research (Conway et al. 2025). The modified language was analyzed under Alternative 2 as "Adequate nesting cover". A footnote was added to the Habitat Objectives table: "Suitable nesting cover" would be based on the best available science and may differ by ecological site potential and vegetation type. In addition, the recently concluded 10-year Grouse-Grazing Study by the University of Idaho (Conway et al. 2025) is referenced and, pending future publications, acknowledged there may be future changes to indicators and benchmarks.

Clarifications and Edits between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/ROD

PHMA Allocations and Management Direction (Approved RMP Amendment Table 1):

- **Edits to the GRSG Goal:** Replaced "Conserve, enhance, restore" with language directly from FLPMA, removed the reference to BLM manual 6500, and integrated the connectivity concept into a comma-list rather than a stand-alone sentence. These edits retain the desired condition sought in the original goal (habitat that supports connected, persistent and healthy populations), and improve alignment with FLPMA's statutory language. The comma list of "conserve, enhance, restore" are all versions of management; splitting them out does not clarify the agency's desired condition. These edits focus on the agency's desired outcome, regardless of the most applicable managerial tool. Finally, as a special status species, GRSG are associated with the BLM's 6840 manual, and not the 6500 wildlife and fisheries manual. Since these edits retain the original desired condition, the changes are not significant.
- **Fluid Minerals Objective:** Changed "…avoid, minimize, and compensate for adverse impacts to GRSG habitat to the extent practical under the law…" to read "…avoid when practicable, then minimize and compensate for adverse impacts to GRSG habitat to the extent required under the law…" The change clarifies that complete avoidance (i.e., closure to leasing) was not the intent of this objective. The change clarifies that avoidance is an important tool, but it is just one of the tools to mitigate impacts to GRSG from fluid mineral development. The change of "practical" to "required" more accurately connects the mitigation tools in this objective to actual statutory requirements instead of just practicality. In addition, the italicized text that was included in the Final

EIS was removed, as it was merely for the reader comprehension when comparing alternatives, which is no longer an issue in the Approved RMP Amendment.

- **Fluid Minerals Management Direction:** Renamed the Allocation section to read "Allocations for Unleased Lands" and moved it to directly precede the language for exceptions, modifications and waivers to more clearly associated the WEMs with the allocations/stipulations. In addition, moved the paragraphs associated with coordination with state agencies, application of WEMs in areas where adaptive management thresholds are activated, and with applicable public review direction to be presented just once, under the "Allocations for Unleased Lands" header rather than repeating them under each applicable WEM. Also moved the Exception 1 paragraph related to land ownership patterns to be a stand-alone Exception 3, as it is unrelated to the other purposes noted in the rest of Exception 1. These and other editorial changes were made to decrease repetition and improve readability.

  Also revised the first sentence of the second paragraph by removing the example and focusing on the outcomes being sought. Deleted the second sentence of the second paragraph as it merely provided some approaches that could be taken to achieve the outcomes from the first sentence ("to promote effective management and connectivity of seasonal habitats and PHMA to accomplish measurable GRSG conservation objectives"). The last sentence of the second paragraph was edited to improve clarity of intent, as the original wording was unclear. These edits relate to improving clarity or removing examples, and the underlying condition being sought has not changed, therefore these edits are not significant.

- **Fluid Minerals Allocations for Unleased Lands/Waivers, Exceptions, Modifications:** The BLM added "controlled surface use (CSU), and Timing Limitations (TL)" to the end of the fluid mineral allocation to better specify the conditions that fluid mineral development is subject to within PHMA. These conditions are not new and were previously described elsewhere in the Proposed RMP Amendment. The full allocation now reads, "Open to leasing subject to no surface occupancy (NSO) (unless otherwise closed), controlled surface use (CSU), and Timing Limitations (TL). Refer to the following NSO management direction."

  The text explicitly identifying a 30-day public review period prior to granting the NSO or disturbance cap waiver, exception and modification was revised. The new text states that "prior to granting a waiver, exception, or modification to any GRSG NSO stipulation or Disturbance Cap, the Authorized Officer shall comply with regulatory public review requirements, if applicable (see 43 CFR 3101)." This change is not significant because the BLM's fluid mineral regulations in the cited section already requires Authorized Officers to provide at least a 30-day public review opportunity prior to granting exceptions (i.e., one-time waivers) and modifications for changes that involve "an issue of major concern to the public" or "…a change to a lease term or stipulation that is substantial…" Because this direction is already in regulation, there is no need to repeat it in the RMP, and its removal from the RMP results in no change to agency practice, therefore this change is not significant.

  The text at the end of the first sentences in NSO Exceptions 1 and 2 that states "after documenting the review of available information associated with the site proposed for the exception" and "both internally compiled and as provided by state, county, and other local agencies, tribal governments, project proponents, other federal agencies or interested stakeholders" was deleted. This change was made to remove implementation process language that is not appropriate for inclusion in RMPs. The parties from which the BLM accepts information is guided by statute, regulation, and policy.

Because the removed language is process (how something will be done, not what will be done), its removal is not significant as the standard that must be met to grant either exception remains.

The last sentence in the second criteria under the GRSG NSO Exception 2 was edited to remove an inconsistency between the exception text and the fluid minerals objective and allocation WEMs. The sentence originally noted that the exception could be granted if it was demonstrated that "the project cannot be avoided or minimized" and that "granting the mitigated exception would not result in adverse effects to GRSG seasonal habitats." The BLM retains discretion to deny any and every exception, and therefore could always "avoid" the effects of a project. Following this thought process, the exception could never be granted, which is inconsistent with having the exception and the fluid mineral leasing objective of applying the full range of mitigation options. The language was revised to shift the focus for considering the exception to the standard that the mitigated exception, after applying avoidance, minimization, and voluntary compensatory mitigation, "would not result in adverse effects to GRSG seasonal habitats." Because the final condition of the two versions is the same, this change is not significant.

- **Non-energy Leasable Minerals:** "Apply required design features, best management practices, and minimization measures identified in the existing GRSG amendments (refer to **Appendix 2**)" was added as Management Direction. This direction was previously included in GHMA only and was inadvertently omitted from inclusion in PHMA in the Proposed RMP Amendment. BLM added this direction to clarify that these measures apply for non-energy leasable minerals projects in PHMA, IHMA, and GHMA.
- **Disturbance Cap:** Added "anthropogenic" as a modifier to the management direction related to "direct habitat disturbance" to further clarify that the disturbance being considered in the cap is that associated with anthropogenic infrastructure developments. In addition, clarified the Disturbance Cap Denominator section in the fourth paragraph related to non-habitat and unsuitable habitat by replacing the word "otherwise" at the end of the first sentence with "areas of non-habitat or unsuitable habitat" and adding examples of processes and data to identify non-habitat and unsuitable habitat in the second sentence. These edits simply clarify otherwise less clear language. Finally, in the list of conditions associated with granting an exception to the disturbance cap, sub-bullets "d" and "f" were combined, as they addressed similar conditions, as well as the condition already stated in "a".

  In the disturbance cap numerator section, the bullet for "military range facilities and infrastructure" was removed. Since implementing the 2015 disturbance cap, no areas in this category have been documented in PHMA. In addition, there are no acres of Department of War lands overlapping PHMA in Utah, Nevada, North Dakota, Montana, or Wyoming. As such, there is no potential for these types of disturbances. In Idaho and South Dakota, a small fraction of the total HMA acres where the disturbance cap applies are Department of War lands (12 acres in Idaho PHMA, 204 acres of South Dakota PHMA, and 11,143 acres of Idaho IHMA). In addition, if any infrastructure was constructed on these lands, it would be a fraction of the total acres. Given current and likely future potential for these types of disturbances, removing this bullet is not significant.
- **Major ROWs:** BLM revised the language of the first major ROW avoidance criteria to better articulate the provision described in MD LR 1 (see **Appendix 2**), which facilitates actions in RMP designated corridors for which they were established. RMP designated corridors may or may not contain infrastructure but impacts were previously analyzed when the RMP designated corridors were established. The sentence now reads "RMP designated corridors within PHMA are open to

consideration of a new major ROW in the category of ROW for which the corridor was designated if the proposed authorization within the existing ROW corridor results in impacts similar to those already described in the environmental analysis to establish the corridor, including indirect disturbance to or disruption of adjacent seasonal habitats."

The second avoidance criteria for major ROWs initially read "the ROW can be routed through, or located within non-habitat or unsuitable habitat and lacks the ecological potential to become suitable habitat…" The language related to unsuitable habitat was removed to align with the exception language in the fluid mineral WEMs section. This change is not significant, as unsuitable habitat that ecologically cannot become suitable would not be habitat, which is already included in the category of non-habitat. In addition, the text of the second bullet also ready "ROWs shall not disrupt connectivity between habitat areas…" This was edited to read "ROWs shall minimize disruption of connectivity…" Completely eliminating any impact to connectivity movements can only be accomplished through not allowing any development. If that was the agency's intent, the area would have been allocated as ROW exclusion. Since the intent of this action is to allow for consideration of development under narrow conditions, the text was changed to improve consistency with intent, while retaining the need to protect connectivity between populations.

In addition, second sentence of the exception language in sub-bullet "a" was moved to be a stand-alone sub-bullet "b" and was reworded to improve clarity of intent.

- **Livestock Grazing:** BLM revised the language in the third sentence of management direction RM-2 to better articulate the management direction's consistency with BLM regulations and policy. The sentence now reads, "Thresholds specific to GRSG habitat will be developed to make significant progress toward fulfillment of the LHS (43 CFR Part 4180.2 or subsequent changes to regulations or policy) and maintain or move PHMA and IHMA toward providing suitable GRSG habitat (e.g., Table 5-1, **Appendix 5**). Thresholds and defined responses will be designed to address the HAF assessment that warranted the Land Health Evaluation finding, and consider ecological site potential, relevant locally specific conditions, and Land Health Standards."

  The BLM removed the second and third sentences in the second paragraph in Allocation RM-1. These sentences present a comma list of potential adjustments the BLM considers "in conformance with [BLM's grazing] regulations." The last sentence of Allocation RM-1 was then merged at the end of the retained sentence. The last sentence refers the reader to Appendix 5, which includes grazing best management practices, many of which include items from the deleted coma list. The deletion of these sentences is not significant due to the lack of RMP-decision, repetition of regulation and policy, and duplication in Appendix 5.

  In addition, the sentence in RM-4 to "focus authorization…on projects that have a nominal or incidental effects" was removed due to the use of the unclear terms of focus, nominal and incidental. Based on experience implementing the 2015 ARMPAs, the use of these undefined and ambiguous terms results in confusion and inconsistency during implementation. The removal of this sentence is not significant, as the overall intent of RM-4 is retained in the absence of this sentence, specifically that "new…improvements should be placed along existing disturbance corridors in the least suitable habitat…"

  Finally, the management direction RM-6 was removed from the Approved RMP Amendment. It was removed to simplify the RMP amendment by removing range management actions that merely re-state the BLM's existing authorities. This change is not significant because nothing in RM-6 compels

or requires the BLM to select a specific course of action if relinquishment occurs, only to consider a course of action, which is a re-statement of BLM's authorities under existing grazing regulations. The BLM will continue to follow applicable law, regulations, and policy when implementing grazing decisions on public lands.

The introduction of Appendix 5 was also edited to clarify that the livestock grazing strategies, practices, or design features are presented as tools but are not required to be considered and dismissed for every action, as the required design features were from the 2015 ARMPA. In addition, the BMPs were edited to eliminate duplication of concepts and clarify implementation in coordination of livestock grazing practices with non-BLM agencies and landowners. For example, BLM's limiting tall structures to decrease predation issues duplicates other GRSG management related to predation language added in the Approved RMP amendment. Where BMPs duplicate management elsewhere in the document, they were removed. This is most evident in the deletion of section 5.1.5 that summarized principles from the BLM's 2004 National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy. That section's concepts are included in management actions in the Approved RMP Amendment and bullets in Appendix 5.

- **Predation:** The first sentence of Management Action 2 was adjusted from, "authorizations that require expanded, or new, or renewal of energy or transmission related infrastructure…" to "authorizations that require expanded, new, renewal, or non-routine maintenance of energy, mining, or transmission related infrastructure projects…" to better explain which projects require proponents to submit a predator subsidy management plan. A definition of "non-routine maintenance" was also added to the **Glossary**.
- **Mitigation:** The mitigation language from the Proposed RMP Amendment and Final EIS was updated to reflect the mitigation language from Alternative 2 in the Proposed RMP Amendment and Final EIS, with adjustments limited to removing references to the rescinded CEQ NEPA regulations. Recission of the 2024 version (6-142) of BLM Manual 6840 and reversion to the 2008 version (Rel – 6-125) changes the agency policy for compensatory mitigation related to special status species. Specifically, the 2024 version notes the land use plan should "…seek to achieve no net loss or net benefit outcomes for special status species…" No such language is in the 2008 version. The 2024 version also directs the BLM to "develop and implement compensatory mitigation…" In the 2008 version, the manual states management should be developed to "minimize or eliminate threats affecting the status of the species or to improve the condition of the species habitat." There is only one sentence of the last option (of eight) to achieve this for BLM special status species that states "off-site mitigation may be used to reduce potential effects on Bureau listed species." The change to the Approved RMP Amendment mitigation language is made to better align with the current special status species policies within the range of alternatives available. Because the intent of this plan amendment has consistently been to seek to avoid and minimize impacts first, with compensatory mitigation being a tertiary tool, the BLM's clarification about how it will approach compensatory mitigation is not a significant change. Moreover, the BLM will continue to rely on the primary protective measures of fluid mineral NSO and a broader disturbance cap, requiring exceptions being met, including voluntary compensatory mitigation, before granting exceptions. For these reasons, changing the compensatory mitigation language is not a significant change. Corresponding changes were made to other actions to align with this change.
- **Utility Scale Solar and Wind:** The allocation for both utility scale wind and solar development remains unchanged as exclusion; the exception criteria for the exclusion allocation were removed

for both wind and solar. Given the nature of the updated GRSG habitat management areas and the amount of land needed for utility scale wind and solar projects, including exceptions to the exclusion allocation is misleading. While there are areas of non-habitat and unsuitable habitat, they are generally small, non-contiguous patches. Combined with the known impacts of large solar and wind projects, and especially the indirect impacts of wind development on adjacent lands, there is very little likelihood that any areas could meet the exceptions. Therefore, removing these exceptions is not a significant change considering potential impacts to both GRSG and wind and solar development.

In the instance of smaller solar projects developed as ancillary support for other approved uses (e.g., mineral development, data centers), narrow exceptions consistent with the fluid mineral NSO exceptions were retained. Such developments can be used to electrify remote mineral developments and can be used in place of constructing powerlines. Any such developments, if proposed, would have similar impacts to those associated with fluid minerals development, so this change is not significant.

GHMA Allocations and Management Direction (Approved RMP Amendment Table 3):

- **Fluid Minerals:** The language from the Proposed RMP Amendment that read "**Allocation and Management Actions:** Same management direction as identified in 2015 and 2019 for all states except as noted in "State-Specific Differences" column was updated to read "**Objectives, Allocation, and Management Direction**: Same as identified in 2015 RMP Amendment." This adjustment was made to reflect BLM's intent that fluid mineral allocations and management direction are not amended in GHMA in this Approved RMP Amendment (see **Appendix 2**). Furthermore, NSO WEMs in GHMA were changed to CSU WEMs in the Approved RMP Amendment, because in Idaho, GHMA is open to leasing subject to CSU, not NSO (see MD MR 1, **Appendix 2** in the Approved RMP Amendment).
- **Livestock Grazing:** BLM corrected a typo in the management direction referenced in Table 2 for livestock grazing management. Previously the language said, "Same as PHMA except RM-3 does not apply" and now it correctly reads, "Same as PHMA except RM-2 does not apply."

Other: Across the RMP Amendment, BLM made several revisions in developing the Idaho-specific Approved RMP Amendment from the rangewide Proposed RMP Amendment. These clarifications include:

- Additional detail when referencing previous GRSG-related RMP Amendments.
- Appendices were renumbered and small editorial changes were made to introductory text.
- Idaho-specific modifications to rangewide text, previously described separately in the Proposed RMP Amendment, were integrated directly into the language in the Approved RMP Amendment. This includes direct edits to the text of objectives, allocations, and management direction, as well as additions of Idaho-specific HMA direction. Additionally:
  - **Coal:** Management direction for coal resources was removed, as BLM does not manage coal resources in Idaho.
  - **Special Status Species Management Direction**
    - **MD SSS 1, 2, 13, 14:** The following SSS management directions were proposed for update in the Proposed RMP Amendment: MD SSS 1 (geographic unit for disturbance cap and adaptive management), MD SSS 2 (HMA definitions), MD SSS 13 (maintain key habitat map), and MD SSS 14 (coordinating with IDFG on population information). However, these four

sets of management direction were fully replaced by the management direction identified in the rangewide management direction in the Proposed RMP Amendment and should not have been included in Idaho's list of state-specific management direction identified on pages 2-74 and 2-76 (Table 2-8) in the Final EIS. Therefore, management direction for MD SSS 1 has been removed, and MD SSS 2, 13, and 14 replaced with the rangewide management direction from the Approved RMP Amendment (see Appendix 2 of the Approved Amendment).

- **MD SSS 29:** SSS management direction MD SSS 29 (Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening Criteria) was updated to ensure review by the interagency GRSG Implementation Team for large-scale anthropogenic disturbance as well as *de minimis* projects where these criteria would not apply. These updates clarify the intent of the management direction.
- **MD SSS 30:** Language has been clarified that for management in PHMA, MD SSS 29 *and* MD SSS 30 apply, as in the 2015 and 2019 RMP Amendments. As a result, "MD SSS 30" was added to the following management directions in PHMA (**Table 1**): major ROWs, saleable minerals, and exception criteria for utility-scale solar and wind, and fluid minerals.

– **Glossary:**
  - Definitions irrelevant to Idaho were removed from the glossary. Conversely, the definition for the Idaho-specific IHMA was added.
  - Definitions for 'historical lek' and 'pending historical lek' were added as defined in the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA)'s lek definitions (Cook et al. 2022). A footnote was also added noting that the WAFWA definition of lek does not influence how BLM estimates buffers for protection of leks from disturbance.
  - Definitions for 'co-location' were updated in the Glossary to match MD SSS 31 since this management direction did not change from 2015 text (see **Appendix 2**). The definition for co-locating Other ROWs now reads "The installation of new ROWs within the existing footprint of an approved ROW boundary or adjacent to an approved ROW boundary", instead of "Installing new authorized ROWs within or on the existing footprint of an approved ROW boundary." This is also consistent with other definitions for 'co-location' which are all "within or adjacent to an existing ROW."

– **Appendix 2, Comparison of Prior Greater Sage-grouse RMP Management Direction with Approved RMP Amendment:** The change for the **Appendix F: Mitigation Framework** in the Approved RMP Amendment was changed from "Completely Revised" to "No change (same as 2019)" to reflect the adoption of Alternative 2 for the mitigation language.

– **Appendix 4, Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Indicators and Benchmarks:** The recently released Final Report of the 10-year Grouse-Grazing Study (Conway et al. 2025) was referenced as an example of updating indicators and benchmarks based on new research. The following was added (in italics) to the second paragraph in section Habitat Indicators and Benchmarks for Site-scale HAF: "The indicators and benchmark values used in these forms at the site scale should be updated to incorporate the best available research related to habitat suitability applicable to the regional and local variability. *For example, publications are anticipated within a year as a result of the 10-year Grouse-Grazing Study which released a Final Report in June 2025 (Conway et al. 2025). Hence, updates to indicators and benchmark values may occur, as appropriate, on seasonal dates for lekking, nesting, and late brood-rearing, and habitat characteristics for sagebrush cover, perennial grass and perennial forb height and cover, pending future scientific publications*". In addition, the following

was added (in italics) to the fifth paragraph of the same section leading up to Table 4-1: "As research becomes available, new data could refine or clarify GRSG selection for vegetation structure and composition in seasonal habitats for certain populations, *e.g. multi-year studies from NV and CA (Coates et al. 2017a, Brussee et al. 2023) and Idaho (Conway et al. 2025)*".

- **Appendix 5, Livestock Grazing Best Management Practices and Design Features and Supplemental Information:** References to "a lek" and "occupied lek" were updated to "an active or pending active lek" or "active or pending active leks" (see Definition of a Lek in Approved RMP Amendment).
- **Appendix B, Lek Buffer Management Direction:** For actions in GHMA, exception criteria were updated to align with changes in mitigation language.

MITIGATION

The BLM has adopted all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm in the Approved RMP Amendment. In determining the scope of the planning effort, BLM identified habitat mitigation as an element considered for amendment to meet the purpose and need of responding to updated scientific information and changing land uses and providing for consistent and effective rangewide conservation based on biological information that is responsive to locally relevant habitat variability. The BLM focused on habitat mitigation as sagebrush habitat fragmentation, loss and disturbance have been identified as the primary influences on long-term GRSG population trends (Knick and Hanser, 2011) over which BLM has some management control. Therefore, as mitigation was within the scope of the RMP Amendment, the BLM considered a range of alternatives for mitigation strategies to best address the purpose and need and analyzed potential impacts of each alternative in the EIS (See FEIS Appendix 21 for more detail).

As described above, the BLM determined the management direction identified in the Proposed RMP Amendment, with the changes as described, in combination with the mitigation approach from Alternative 2, best meets the purpose and need and has decided to select it in this Approved RMP Amendment. The Approved RMP Amendment thus establishes the habitat objectives and management actions below and provides additional detail on the application of mitigation during project implementation (see **Table 1** in the Approved RMP Amendment).

Consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the BLM's Resource Management Planning Regulations at 43 CFR 1610, and BLM policy in the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), all resource management authorizations and actions, and subsequent more detailed or specific planning must conform to the approved RMP. Therefore, by establishing this enforceable RMP direction, the BLM has adopted all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Tribal Government Consultation

There are five potentially affected federally recognized Tribes who have an interest in the Idaho portion of the planning area: the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, Nez Perce Tribe, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and Coeur d'Alene Tribe. BLM initiated Tribal consultation efforts in the preparation of this RMP Amendment and coordinated with all five Tribes on the planning effort in accordance with BLM Manual 8130 (BLM 2004) and Handbook 1780 (BLM 2016a). The BLM contacted the Tribes by mail, email, and/or phone at multiple stages in the planning process (direct outreach, official Scoping period, Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS comment period, and during administrative review periods). Subsequent outreach continued through emails, phone calls, and meetings with Tribal personnel, as they have expressed interest. The BLM received requests from the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes for briefings during regularly scheduled Tribal

consultation meetings with BLM Idaho Districts. None of the Tribes entered into formal government-to-government consultation on the planning effort.

On September 4, 2024, the BLM held an online information session for Tribal governments to provide an update on the development of the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS.

State Historic Preservation Office Coordination

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and regulations at 36 CFR Part 800 govern the BLM's cultural resource management programs. These regulations provide specific procedures for consultation between the BLM and State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO). The BLM Idaho State Office coordinated with the Idaho SHPO in accordance with the 2014 State Protocol Agreement between Idaho SHPO and the BLM on this plan amendment effort and in accordance with the National Programmatic Agreement (PA) between the BLM, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. The BLM has met its obligations under Section 106 of the NHPA, 54 U.S.C. § 306108, as outlined in the National PA and the State Protocol. The Approved RMP Amendment will not approve any site-specific actions on BLM-administered lands within the planning area. The BLM will satisfy the requirements of NHPA Section 106 for future implementation-level decisions, such as project proposals, including adequate consultation with SHPOs, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs), Native American Tribes, and other interested parties, consistent with the alternative procedures set forth in the National PA and relevant State Protocol or where applicable the Section 106 regulations.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation

Under Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, federal agencies must consult with USFWS when an action the agency carries out, funds, or authorizes may affect any federally listed or endangered species or its critical habitat. The Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS describes potential impacts on threatened and endangered species because of management actions proposed in the alternatives. The USFWS is a cooperating agency in this planning process. The BLM has met with the USFWS and provided them with drafts of proposed management direction for discussion and input.

The BLM initiated Section 7 consultation with the USFWS on August 14, 2023, before the release of the Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS and requested concurrence on which species would require consideration during consultation. Over the ensuing months, regular meetings were held to identify the species that would be analyzed in the biological assessment, to address which actions could affect those species, and to determine whether the implementation of the Proposed RMP Amendment "may affect" the species for which this consultation occurred.

The BLM submitted the biological assessment to the USFWS on November 19, 2024, with an amendment submitted on December 6, 2024, for review on whether the Proposed Plan Amendment would affect a Federally listed, proposed, or candidate species. The USFWS evaluated the biological assessment and concurred with either a "no effect" or "may affect, but not likely to adversely affect" determination via memorandum for all states within the planning area on December 9, 2024. Based on changes to BLM's Proposed RMP Amendment, summarized in the **Changes and Clarifications** section above, the USFWS provided a revised concurrence memorandum on January 8, 2025. On September 10, 2025, BLM provided an updated memo and Biological Assessment for the GRSG Rangewide Planning effort and the Proposed Changes document. On October 22, 2025, USFWS provided a concurrence letter concluding informal consultation on BLM's Greater Sage-grouse Rangewide Planning Changes to Proposed RMP Amendment for Idaho, Montana/Dakotas, Nevada/California, Utah, and Wyoming document. On December 8, 2025, the

USFWS reviewed the changes made in response to public comments and DOI review and stated that they did not need to re-issue a concurrence memorandum. This memorandum is included as **Appendix 7** in this Approved RMP Amendment.

Cooperating Agencies

In December 2021 and January 2022, the BLM invited Tribal governments and state and local agencies with jurisdiction by either law or special expertise, or both, to participate as cooperating agencies in the planning process. A cooperating agency can be a Tribe, federal, state, or local government agency with jurisdiction by law or special expertise that assists a lead federal agency in developing an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement (43 CFR 1610.3-1(b)). The BLM invited many cooperators to engage in this effort who either did not reply or chose not to participate.

Coordination with cooperating agencies has included project presentations and working meetings discussing the purpose and need, new science, alternative strategies, range of alternatives, review of alternative text, meetings to review subsequent changes and further refine the alternatives, and a review of the administrative Draft RMP Amendment/EIS. Since the release of the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS, the BLM has met with cooperating agencies to discuss their feedback on the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS and get their input on the development of the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and state-specific management direction. Cooperating agencies were provided an administrative draft of the Proposed RMP Amendment management direction for review. As a result of these reviews and the many state-level meetings with cooperating agencies, the BLM made many changes to the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS that improved the clarity of the document and addressed cooperating agency concerns.

Details on the full process followed for cooperating agency invitation, engagement, and participation can be found in the Final EIS in Chapter 5, Section 5.4 Cooperating Agencies.

Federal cooperating agencies included the United States Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For BLM Idaho, cooperating agencies within the state include Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation, Idaho Governor's Office of Energy and Mineral Resources and Office of Species Conservation, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho Army National Guard, Blaine County, Clark County, Custer County.

Governor's Consistency Review

The BLM's planning regulations require that BLM RMPs and RMP Amendments be "consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans, and the policies and procedures contained therein, of other Federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian Tribes, so long as the guidance and resource management plans also are consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of Federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands" (43 CFR 1610.3-2(a)).

The BLM made the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS available to the Governor of Idaho for a 60-day consistency review as required by 43 CFR 1610.3-2(e). The Idaho Governor's consistency review of the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS ran for 60 days from November 8, 2024 through January 7, 2025. The Governor of Idaho submitted a letter to the BLM that raised concerns and potential inconsistencies between the Proposed RMP Amendment and state policies. The BLM met with the Governor's Office twice to discuss their concerns. In response to the Idaho Governor's January 7, 2025 letter and follow-up discussions, BLM sent a response to the Governor of Idaho on January 17, 2025. The Governor's Office did not appeal BLM's response letter. As a result of these meetings, the BLM provided clarifying language to the RMP Amendment

as described in the **Clarifications** section of this ROD. The BLM and the Governor's Office also committed to an ongoing dialogue on issues of interest to the state. Close collaboration and coordination for consistency between state and federal GRSG plans resulted in the BLM moving forward with issuance of the RMP Amendment and ROD.

RMP Amendment Monitoring

RMP monitoring is the process of tracking the implementation of resource management plan decisions (implementation monitoring) and collecting data/information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of land use plan decisions (effectiveness monitoring) in meeting the purpose and need of the plan or plan amendment. Monitoring strategies for GRSG habitat and populations must be collaborative, as habitat occurs across jurisdictional boundaries. As part of the 2015 GRSG amendment effort, the BLM developed a monitoring framework to provide consistent approaches to monitor planning actions across the range. In 2021, the BLM published the *Greater Sage-Grouse Plan Implementation Rangewide Monitoring Report for 2015-2020* (BLM 2015a) with the results of implementing the 2015 monitoring framework. As part of this amendment process, the BLM revisited the approaches in the monitoring framework and updated it based on lessons learned over the past eight years. The updated monitoring framework is in **Appendix 3**. The BLM's monitoring efforts will continue in partnership with federal and state fish and wildlife agencies.

Monitoring data is used to draw conclusions on whether management actions are being implemented, and if they are helping to meet the stated objectives. Conclusions are then used to recommend whether to continue current management or to identify what changes may need to be made to meet objectives. The BLM will use plan evaluations to determine if the decisions in the RMP Amendment may need to be revised in light of new information and monitoring data. The plan evaluations will follow the protocols established by the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), Manual 1735 Inventory and Monitoring of Ecological Resources, or other appropriate guidance in effect at the time the evaluation is initiated.

Public Involvement

In addition to the extensive collaboration with federal, state, local, and Tribal governments and cooperating agencies detailed above, the BLM provided numerous opportunities for public involvement throughout the development of the RMP Amendment and EIS. The Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and this Approved RMP Amendment were substantially shaped based on input provided by the public.

Project Website

The BLM maintains a national GRSG conservation website (https://www.blm.gov/programs/fish-and-wildlife/sage-grouse) as part of its efforts to maintain and restore GRSG habitat on public lands. The site is intended to help the public learn how the BLM is working on maintaining and restoring GRSG habitat. It includes background information related to government and BLM roles in GRSG conservation. In addition to the national GRSG conservation website, the BLM established a National NEPA Register website with information related to this planning effort at https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016719/510. Throughout the planning process, the BLM maintained both websites to include the most current information, and share background documents, information on public meetings, contact information, and all relevant planning and NEPA-related documents.

Scoping Process

The formal public scoping process for the Proposed RMP Amendment/Draft EIS began on November 22, 2021, with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to amend RMPs and prepare an EIS in the *Federal Register* (Vol. 86 No. 222). The NOI notified the public of the BLM's intent to develop an RMP Amendment

for the management of GRSG and initiated the public scoping period, which closed on February 8, 2022. In January 2022, BLM hosted two virtual public meetings, during which BLM provided opportunities to become involved, learn about the project and the planning process, and participate in a question-and-answer session where participants were able to ask BLM specialists questions and receive live responses. During the comment period, the BLM received 258 total submissions containing 1,865 unique comments. The issues identified during public scoping and outreach helped inform the development of the alternatives and the resource issues analyzed in the Proposed RMP Amendment/EIS.

Draft RMP Amendment/EIS Comment Period

The BLM released the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS for a 90-day comment period from March 15th, 2024, through June 13th, 2024. Thirteen public meetings were held, including two virtual meetings and eleven in-person meetings throughout the planning area. Over 39,000 submissions were received, including approximately 6,000 individual comments. The BLM has also initiated and/or participated in over 80 meetings with Tribes; federal, state, and county cooperating agencies; and interest groups between the issuance of the Draft RMP Amendment/EIS and Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS. The BLM considered all public comments and responded to all substantive comments in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS (see Appendix 22, Draft RMP Amendment /EIS Public Outreach and Responses to Substantive Public Comments in the Final EIS). The high level of public comments and high level of stakeholder coordination significantly shaped the RMP Amendment.

Final EIS Availability Period and Proposed RMP Amendment Protest Period

The BLM released the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS on November 8, 2024, and published an associated Federal Register Notice (89 FR 90311) on November 15, 2024. The Final EIS was also identified in the Environmental Protection Agency's November 15, 2024 EIS Availability Federal Register Notice (89 FR 90280).

The public was invited to submit protests on the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS. The protest period was 30 days, from November 15 to December 16, 2024. The BLM received 60 unique protest letters.

The planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2 outline the requirements for filing a valid protest. Resolution of protests is delegated to the BLM Assistant Director for Resources and Planning whose decision on the protest is the final decision of the U.S. Department of the Interior (43 CFR 1610.5-2(b)) consistent with the BLM Delegation of Authority Manual (MS-1203 Delegation of Authority). The BLM evaluated all protest letters to determine which protest letters were complete and timely, and which persons have standing to protest. Four letters were complete and timely but were dismissed because the people who submitted the letters did not have standing to protest. The remaining 56 letters were complete and timely and were from parties who had standing to protest. Of these, 50 letters contained valid protest issues.

After careful review of the report by the BLM's Assistant Director for Resources and Planning, the Assistant Director concluded that the BLM followed the applicable laws, regulations, and policies and considered all relevant resource information and public input. The Assistant Director documented and addressed the valid protest issues in a protest resolution report, BLM Director's Protest Resolution Report: Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning Proposed RMP Amendment and Final EIS which has been posted on the BLM's

website[10] https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016719/510. All valid protest issues were denied; no changes to the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS were necessary.

Changes to Proposed RMP Amendment Comment Period

The BLM published significant changes to the proposed management direction published in the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS were published for public comment on September 2, 2025, for a 30-day comment period. For more information, see **Changes and Clarifications made between Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS and Approved RMP Amendment/Final EIS**.

Ongoing Actions

The BLM has numerous ongoing reviews of proposed projects, ranging from proposals for which the BLM has just received an application to those where the BLM is nearing a decision. The extent to which this Approved RMP Amendment will apply to these ongoing projects will depend on the stage of the project in the NEPA review and decision-making process. To maintain the orderly administration and management of the public lands, the BLM will be consistent with the Approved RMP Amendment unless the BLM has a Draft EIS or Environmental Assessment for the project before the publication of the Approved RMP Amendment. The decision for such projects and any subsequent authorizations associated with the approval (such as the issuance of a ROW authorized by a decision) may be exempted from the requirements of this Approved RMP Amendment. The BLM has the discretion to apply the Approved RMP Amendment to projects that are substantially underway and will seek input from the project proponent prior to exercising such discretion.

Availability of the Approved RMP Amendment

The ROD and the Approved RMP Amendment may be obtained online on the BLM's National NEPA Register at: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016719/510. Limited print copies are available upon request from the BLM Idaho State Office, ATTN: ID-931, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Boise, ID 83709.

Approval

I hereby certify that BLM has considered all alternatives, information, analyses, and objections submitted by state, Tribal, and local governments, cooperating agencies, and public commenters in developing the Environmental Impact Statement. In consideration of the foregoing, I approve the Greater Sage-Grouse Rangewide Planning Resource Management Plan Amendment for BLM Idaho.

Kim Prill
State Director (Acting), Idaho
Bureau of Land Management

[10] BLM Director's Protest Resolution Report is available at: https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/public-participation/protest-resolution-reports.

Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment

Goal
Manage lands in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, ecological, and environmental values that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals, and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and uses consistent with Section 102 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (as amended). Manage GRSG habitat to support habitat connectivity and persistent, healthy populations, consistent with BLM's Special Status Species (SSS) Management Policy (BLM-M-6840) and in coordination and cooperation with state wildlife agencies and appropriate state authorities.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT AREA ALIGNMENTS

The BLM applies its management allocations and management direction for GRSG within Habitat Management Areas (HMAs). Although the BLM has identified and mapped the Habitat Management Areas (HMAs) to encompass multiple land ownerships, reflecting the wide-ranging ecological needs of GRSG, the management allocations and management direction that follow only apply to BLM-administered lands, including areas where BLM administers subsurface minerals. Following are the rangewide HMA categories (Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA), Idaho-specific Important Habitat Management Areas (IHMA), and General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA). Refer to maps and table in **Appendix 1**, Table and Maps.

Rangewide Habitat Management Areas
Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA) have the highest value to maintaining sustainable GRSG populations and can include breeding, late brood-rearing, winter concentration areas, and migration or connectivity corridors. The BLM intent for these areas is to maintain and enhance habitat conditions that will support persistent and healthy GRSG populations through management to minimize habitat loss and degradation. Areas are delineated using core and connectivity data or maps and other resource information that the BLM has identified in coordination with respective state and federal agencies. HMAs are delineated as approximate boundaries and representations of habitat, and therefore there may be areas of non-habitat contained within these boundaries.
Important Habitat Management Areas (IHMA) are defined as lands that encompass moderate to high-quality GRSG habitat and populations necessary for providing a management buffer for PHMA, connecting patches of PHMA, and in some cases supporting important populations and habitat independent of PHMA. The intent for IHMA is to maintain habitat conditions that will support persistent and healthy GRSG populations.
General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA) are lands that are, or have the potential to become, occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of PHMA or IHMA, managed to sustain GRSG populations. These areas are defined differentially by state wildlife management agencies, but generally are of poorer GRSG habitat quality with reduced occupancy when compared to PHMA or IHMA. Some state wildlife agencies have identified areas of GHMA as important for restoration, connectivity, or seasonal habitats. The intent for GHMA is to maintain habitat conditions to support GRSG populations consistent with the state agency designations of recovery, connectivity, or seasonal habitats. Management actions will maintain, enhance, or restore habitat for GRSG. HMAs are delineated as approximate boundaries and representations of habitat and therefore include potential or unoccupied habitat and may contain areas of non-habitat.

Table 1. Priority Habitat Management Area (PHMA) Objectives, Allocations, and Management Direction

This table identifies the allocations and management direction that apply in PHMA. The table describes if the Approved RMP Amendment is amending the "objective", "allocation", or "management direction" for the resource topic identified. In some instances, the Approved RMP Amendment addresses all three of these planning categories for a resource topic while in other resource topics only one or two of the categories are amended. All three planning categories are identified for each resource topic and if it is not being amended it will be identified as "N/A", not applicable. In those "N/A" instances, the 2015 or 2019 Amendment decision is not being proposed for amendment and remains in place. The existing 2015 and 2019 Amendment decisions are described in **Appendix 2**. Several management actions refer to existing laws, regulations, policies, or technical references. The citations in this document are based on the versions current as of ROD publication; the most current versions of these various references would be used during implementation (e.g., in 2025 the Habitat Assessment Framework is TR-6710-1 dated 2015; updated versions of the HAF or its equivalent would be applied to all actions that reference the HAF).

Maps that show where the allocations and management direction apply can be found in **Appendix 1**, Table and Maps.

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
Fluid Minerals (including geothermal)
Objective: Manage fluid mineral leasing and development (including geothermal) in GRSG habitat management areas to avoid when practicable, then minimize, and voluntarily compensate for adverse impacts to GRSG habitat to the extent required under the law and BLM jurisdiction. **Management Direction:** **Development in Areas Already Leased:** When considering exploration and development on areas leased for fluid mineral resources in PHMA and IHMA, application of measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate potential impacts will be considered through completion of the requirements at 43 CFR Part 3162.5 (Environmental Review) and 36 CFR Part 228.108 (Surface Use Requirements).Such measures may include existing lease stipulations, project design, operator-committed measures, RMP required design features (RDFs), and local conditions of approval (COAs). The BLM will work with project proponents and the state wildlife agency to promote effective management and connectivity of seasonal habitats and PHMA and IHMA to accomplish measurable GRSG conservation objectives. Surface use rights associated with existing leases will be recognized and respected. For proposed operations in PHMA and IHMA, the Surface Use Plan of Operations (refer to 43CFR Part 3162.3-1(f)) shall address, at a minimum, the applicable RDFs in the RMP. RMP-defined project features reducing GRSG impacts not utilized in the Surface Use Plan of Operations based on site-specific or project-specific considerations shall be noted in the project file, along with a rationale for not including them. The BLM will evaluate whether each conservation measure is reasonable and consistent with surface use rights as part of the environmental review process (see 43 CFR Part 3101.12). **Allocations for Unleased Lands:** Open to leasing subject to no surface occupancy (NSO) (unless otherwise closed), and controlled surface use (CSU). Refer to the following NSO exceptions. To approve waivers, exceptions or modifications based on any of the listed criteria, after coordination with the appropriate State agency, the Authorized Officer must document that the proposed action satisfies the listed criteria. If the State agency does not concur with granting the exception, the Authorized Officer must provide rationale for how the criteria are met considering the information the State provides. If the area associated with the proposed development seeking the exception or modification (e.g., well pad, compressor station) is in an area in which one of the adaptive management thresholds has been activated (refer to Adaptive Management Section), no exceptions or modification would be considered until the causal factor analysis is completed. If the causal factor analysis concludes fluid minerals is or could contribute to the threshold being activated or not recovering, no

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
exception or modification would be granted. If the analysis is inconclusive on cause, exceptions or modifications could be considered. Waivers are excluded from this consideration. Prior to granting a waiver, exception, or modification to any GRSG NSO or Disturbance Cap fluid minerals stipulation, the Authorized Officer shall comply with regulatory public review requirements, if applicable (see 43 CFR 3101). **GRSG No Surface Occupancy (NSO) Exceptions** a) **Exception 1 -** The Authorized Officer may consider and grant an exception to the NSO stipulation within 3.1 miles of active and pending active leks in PHMA if it is demonstrated that development and surface occupancy **has no direct impacts to or disruption of GRSG or its habitat** based on: I. The location of the proposed authorization is determined to be non-habitat (refer to **Glossary**), does not provide important connectivity between habitat areas (as determined by a wildlife biologist and confirmed by the BLM using methods such as the HAF and coordinated with the appropriate state authority), and the project includes RDFs to prevent indirect disturbance to or disruption of adjacent seasonal habitats, regardless of distance from the active or pending lek, that may impair their biological function; **OR** II. Topography/areas of non-habitat create an effective barrier to impacts (e.g., protected from visual and audible disturbances to GRSG and its habitat); **OR** III. By co-locating the proposed authorization with existing disturbance, no additional impacts will be realized above those already associated with the existing similarly sized infrastructure, including indirect disturbance to or disruption of adjacent seasonal habitats that may impair their biological function. Exception 1 will also be subject to Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Development Criteria (**MD SSS 29** and **MD SSS 30**). b) **Exception 2** - The Authorized Officer may consider and grant an exception to the NSO stipulation associated with the remainder of PHMA beyond 3.1 miles from active or pending active leks if it **would not result in adverse effects to GRSG seasonal habitats** based on **one** of the following criteria: I. The criteria presented in Exception #1. **OR** II. The proposed project seeking the exception would not result in adverse effects to GRSG seasonal habitats based on site-specific information and application of the full range of mitigation tools (e.g., avoidance, minimization, voluntary compensation), as documented by a wildlife biologist and confirmed by the BLM. Proponents may demonstrate no adverse effects by mitigating residual impacts using voluntary compensatory mitigation. To grant this exception based on the use of voluntary compensatory mitigation, the compensation project must be completed and habitat functionality documented before the exception is granted. The compensation must also provide offsetting benefits to the population being impacted. Exception 2 will also be subject to Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Development Criteria (**MD SSS 29** and **MD SSS 30**). c) **Exception 3** - An exception could be considered if the proposed location on public lands would be undertaken as an alternative to a similar action occurring on a nearby non-public lands parcel (e.g., due to ownership patterns), and development on the public parcel in question would eliminate impacts on more important and/or limited GRSG habitat (e.g., wet meadows, brood-rearing habitat) on the non-public nearby parcel; this exception must also include measures sufficient to allow the BLM to conclude in its documenting analysis that such benefits will endure for the duration of the proposed action's impacts on public lands (e.g., confirmation of an easement).

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
GRSG NSO Modifications The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a modification to the fluid mineral lease NSO stipulation, allowing for surface occupancy only where: 1) an exception is granted, as described above, for the primary disturbance (e.g., well pad, compressor station), **AND** 2) the potential associated infrastructure related to the development is not individually precluded by other actions (e.g., roads, pipelines, power lines that could otherwise be considered through a ROW). While the NSO stipulation could be modified for these additional developments, they must still comply with other GRSG management actions (e.g., mitigation, disturbance cap, minerals/energy density, seasonal restrictions, RDFs, etc.) if an exception to the NSO is granted. **GRSG NSO Waiver** The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a waiver of the NSO stipulation on an existing lease after documenting, in coordination with the appropriate state agency, that the lease with the GRSG NSO stipulation is no longer in PHMA. This will only be applicable on leases that were issued when the parcel was in PHMA, then the PHMA boundaries were subsequently adjusted through the appropriate planning process.
GRSG Disturbance Cap Exceptions and Waivers For fluid mineral (including geothermal) disturbance cap exceptions and waivers, follow the direction for Disturbance Cap exceptions and conditions section. **Disturbance Cap Modifications** None. **Disturbance Cap Waivers** The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a waiver of the stipulation on an existing lease if the area mapped as PHMA when the lease was issued is no longer mapped as such through the appropriate planning process. **GRSG Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Exception** The Authorized Officer may consider and provide temporary relief from seasonal constraints by granting an exception after documenting the review of available information, including best available science, associated with the site proposed for the exception. This direction applies in PHMA, GHMA, and all other state identified HMAs. While the BLM considers information from all sources, the state wildlife agency can provide information directly associated with GRSG use, including, if available, whether GRSG populations are not using the seasonal habitat during that year's seasonal life cycle period if available. Based on this information and recommendation, and documented variability in seasonal conditions (e.g., early/late spring, long/heavy winter), use patterns, or other applicable information the Authorized Officer may consider a one-time exception if development associated with it will not have direct/indirect negative impacts on GRSG populations and/or their habitat. **Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Modifications** The BLM can grant modifications to seasonal restrictions if the BLM, in coordination with the state wildlife agency and other appropriate state authorities, on a case-by-case basis, determines that granting the modification will not adversely impact the population being protected. The Authorized Officer may grant a modification to the dates and areas associated with seasonal timing restrictions after documenting the review of available information associated with the site proposed for the modification based on one of the criteria described below: 1) The geographic and temporal conditions demonstrate that any modification (shortening/extending seasonal timeframes) is justified on the basis that it serves to better protect or enhance GRSG and its habitat than if the strict application of seasonal timing restrictions are implemented. Under this scenario, modifications can occur if one or more of the following conditions can be documented:

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
a. A proposed authorization is expected to have beneficial or neutral impacts on GRSG and its habitat. b. Topography or other factors eliminate direct and indirect impacts from visibility and audibility to GRSG and its habitat. c. There are documented local variations that indicate the seasonal life cycle periods are different than presented. 2) Modifications are needed to address an immediate public health and/or safety concern in a timely manner (e.g., maintaining a road impacted by flooding). **Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Waiver** The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a waiver of the stipulation on an existing lease if the area that was mapped as a GRSG habitat management area (regardless of type) when the lease was issued is no longer mapped as such through the appropriate planning process. **Tracking Waivers, Exceptions, or Modifications** Refer to **Appendix 3**, Greater Sage-grouse Monitoring Framework, Measure 6 for tracking requirements.
Saleable Minerals/Mineral Materials
Objective: N/A **Allocation**: Closed to new mineral materials development but open for new free use permits and the expansion of existing pits (within ¼ mile of existing improved roads, but not within 3.1-miles of leks, proposed disturbance of less than 40-acre if new free use pit), or if the BLM can verify the area is not habitat and the expansion will not adversely impact any adjoining seasonal habitat. **Management Direction:** In order to support maintenance needs for existing local roads and ensure public safety, new and expansion of existing free-use permits will be exempt from Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Development Criteria (**MD SSS 29** and **MD SSS 30**), but subject to RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**).
Nonenergy Leasable Minerals
Objective: N/A **Allocation**: Closed to new leases but allow expansion of existing operations. **Management Direction**: Apply required design features, best management practices, and minimization measures identified in the existing GRSG amendments (refer to **Appendix 2**).
Coal
Objective: N/A **Allocation:** N/A **Management Direction**: No management direction due to the absence of the mineral.
Locatable Minerals
Objective: N/A **Allocation:** Open, unless currently withdrawn.
Major Rights of Way
Objective: N/A **Allocation:** Avoidance for new major Rights of Way (ROWs; linear features such as overhead transmission lines, distribution pipelines, and large non-linear surface disturbing projects. Refer to **Glossary**).

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
Management Direction: If during consideration of a proposed project-level authorization for a ROW action, the determination of whether it is a major or minor ROW is questioned, with supporting rationale, the Authorized Officer, in consultation with the BLM State Office lead(s), will make the final determination. Authorizations may be granted if one of the criteria below and the additional conditions are met. **Major Rights of Way Avoidance Criteria:** 1) RMP designated corridors within PHMA are open to consideration of a new major ROW in the category of ROW for which the corridor was designated if the proposed authorization within the existing ROW corridor results in impacts similar to those already described in the environmental analysis to establish the corridor, including indirect disturbance to or disruption of adjacent seasonal habitats; **OR** 2) The ROW can be routed through, or located within, non-habitat. Non-habitat will be determined by a wildlife biologist and confirmed by the BLM using the Criteria Based Management for Non-Habitat described in this table and coordinated with state wildlife agencies and other appropriate state authority. ROWs shall minimize disruption of connectivity between habitat areas and should be designed to prevent indirect disturbance to or disruption of adjacent seasonal habitats (as disclosed in the environmental analysis). a. Applicants must clearly demonstrate to the Authorized Officer, in consultation with the BLM State Office lead(s) that no viable alternatives exist for placement of facilities outside the avoidance area prior to analyzing placement within an avoidance area. b. ROWs may be placed in PHMA if doing so reduces the risk of wildfire, decreases risk to human health and safety, or meets national security needs. The ROW must be the minimum necessary to achieve the ROW's purpose and will not otherwise be viable in an area that is "open" to ROWs; **OR** 3) The proposed location on federal lands will be undertaken as an alternative to a similar action occurring on a nearby non-federal lands parcel, and development on the public parcel in question will eliminate impacts on more important and/or limited GRSG habitat (e.g., wet meadows, brood-rearing habitat) on the non-federal nearby parcel. The ROW must be the minimum necessary to achieve the ROW's purpose and will not otherwise be viable in an area that is "open" to ROWs. *If one or multiple of the avoidance criteria can be met, the ROW must also meet the following conditions in order to be permitted in PHMA:* a) Micro-siting while developing the major ROW is required to limit impacts and maintain connectivity corridors between seasonal habitats. This includes using topography and non-habitat as effective barrier to adverse impacts and co-location with existing, similarly sized, infrastructure; **AND** b) Where the development of the major ROW is outside a designated corridor, apply minimization measures (e.g., disturbance cap, seasonal constraints, tall structure limitations, RDFs, nest and perch deterrents); **AND** c) Residual direct and indirect impacts will be mitigated consistent with state mitigation policies or requirements as applicable. If requiring mitigation both inside and outside of RMP-designated corridors disincentivizes location in the designated corridor or another route that has lesser impacts to GRSG, the Authorized Officer may consider adjusting the mitigation requirement if doing so reduces impacts to GRSG compared to an alignment that otherwise requires mitigation (e.g., development in an RMP-designated corridor that has existing transmission lines already present). The Authorized Officer shall coordinate with the applicable state agencies to ensure compliance with compensatory mitigation to the extent required by state policies or regulations. In addition, new major ROWs in PHMA are subject to Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening and Development Criteria (**MD SSS 29** and **MD SSS 30**).

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
Minor Rights-of-Way
Objective: N/A **Allocation:** Avoidance as per direction in the 2015 GRSG plan amendment and subject RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**). **Management Direction:** N/A
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)
No ACECs designated.
Livestock Grazing
Objective (RM-1): Manage livestock grazing in GRSG habitat in a manner that meets or makes progress toward meeting Idaho Land Health Standard (LHS) 8 ("*Habitats are suitable to maintain viable populations of threatened and endangered, sensitive, and other special status species")* and applies the guideline that addresses "restoring, maintaining, or enhancing habitats of...special status species to promote their conservation" (43 CFR Part 4180.2(e)(9) or subsequent changes to regulations or policy). **Allocation (RM-1)**: The presence of GRSG HMAs will not affect whether an area is available for livestock grazing. During livestock grazing authorization renewals, Allotment Management Plan (or its functional equivalent) development, or other appropriate implementation-level planning, BLM will follow all applicable livestock grazing regulations including 43 CFR Subpart 4120 – Grazing Management and 43 CFR 4180.2 Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration or any subsequent revisions, and the best management practices and design features in **Appendix 5**. **Management Direction** **RM-1**: During the Land Health Assessment (LHA) process, use the criteria identified in the Sage-Grouse HAF (BLM-TR-6710-1 - Stiver et al. 2015 – as revised) and other BLM approved methodology to provide multiple lines of evidence (consistent with BLM Manual 1283) for determining whether vegetation structure, condition, and composition are meeting or making significant progress towards meeting LHS Idaho Standard 8. This includes referencing appropriate Ecological Site Descriptions (ESD), associated State and Transition Model (STM) and existing ecological condition information. For GRSG, the standard will generally be met when vegetation conditions provide for suitable GRSG habitat at the HAF site-scale (refer to **Table 4-1, Appendix 4**), based on existing ecological condition, ecological potential, and existing vegetation information. Where the LHS Idaho Standard 8 (specific to GRSG) is not being met – as indicated by an unsuitable site-scale HAF assessment relative to site potential – and current livestock grazing is a significant causal factor (43 CFR Part 4180, BLM H-4180-1 or subsequent changes to regulations or policy), adjustments to livestock grazing practices and activities will be made at the authorization, allotment or activity plan level and in accordance with applicable regulations (43 CFR Part 4180.2) or subsequent changes to regulations or policy). Any adjustments to livestock grazing will be made based on current ecological potential according to ESD, associated STM and existing ecological state. **RM-2**: In PHMA and IHMA, when fully processing livestock grazing authorizations where the LHS Idaho Standard 8 is not being met (specific to GRSG habitat) and current livestock grazing has been identified as a significant causal factor (43 CFR Part 4180, BLM H-4180-1 or subsequent changes to regulations or policy), the NEPA analysis must include in at least one alternative with specific thresholds and defined responses that would be included in the terms and conditions of the grazing authorization if that alternative were selected. One or more defined responses will allow the Authorized Officer to consider adjustments to livestock grazing during the term of the authorization that have already been analyzed in a NEPA document. Thresholds specific to GRSG habitat will be developed to make significant progress toward fulfillment of LHS (43 CFR Part 4180.2 or subsequent changes to regulations or policy) and maintain or move PHMA and IHMA toward providing suitable GRSG habitat (e.g., **Table 4-1,**

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
Appendix 4). Thresholds and defined responses will be designed to address the HAF assessment that warranted the Land Health Evaluation finding, and consider ecological site potential, and relevant locally specific conditions, and LHS. **RM-3**: During the livestock grazing authorization renewal process, evaluate all existing livestock management range improvements with respect to their effect on GRSG and GRSG habitat. Consider removal or modification of projects that negatively affect GRSG or GRSG habitat. Range improvements needed for management of sensitive species habitat or other sensitive resources should be maintained but consider implementing improvements in a manner less impactful to GRSG (Refer to **Appendix 5** for Livestock Grazing Management Best Management Practices and Design Features). **RM-4**: Range improvements are defined as any activity or program relating to rangelands which is designed to improve forage, change vegetative composition, control patterns of use, provide water, stabilize soil and water conditions and provide habitat for livestock and wildlife. Design new range improvement projects to enhance livestock distribution or management and to control the duration, timing and intensity of grazing. They may include, application of new technologies such as voluntary virtual fencing. In PHMA, any new structural range improvements should be placed along existing disturbance corridors or in the least suitable habitat, to the extent practicable, and are subject to appropriate design features (**Appendix 5**) and NEPA. **RM-5:** Identify fences in high-risk areas in coordination with the state wildlife agency or other appropriate state authority. Priority should be given to areas within 1.2 miles of an active or pending active lek (Christiansen 2009; Stevens 2011) or other areas identified as important seasonal habitats or areas of GRSG concentration. Evaluate if the fence is needed and/or meets BLM wildlife friendly fencing standards (BLM H 1741). If the fence is unnecessary, remove it. If the fence is needed to support management, mark fences with high visibility fence markers in high risk or important areas (Christiansen 2009; Stevens 2011). Where marking fences does not reduce fence-related GRSG mortality, modify fences. Modification could include re-routing, altering construction materials, using seasonal drop fencing, or limiting perching of predators. New fences within high-risk areas will only be authorized if at least one of the following criteria is met: a) It is consistent with the overall RMP GRSG objective; **OR** b) Local terrain features shield nearby habitat or reduce the habitat importance; **OR** c) The fence is constructed with high visibility markers to reduce GRSG strikes. Evaluating existing fences to assess mortality risk is recommended in all GRSG habitats.
Wild Horse and Burro
Objective: N/A **Allocation: N/A** **Management Direction:** **Management Action 1**: Where wild horses and burros overlap with GRSG: a. Manage wild horse and burro populations within established Appropriate Management Levels (AML: see H-4700-1); **AND** b. Incorporate GRSG habitat objectives into wild horse and burro management (e.g., herd management area plans, AML) monitoring, and gather prioritization, with prioritization of such activities in PHMA, IHMA, then GHMA; **AND** c. Prioritize gathers in GRSG PHMA unless removals are necessary in other areas to address higher priority issues, including herd health impacts. **Management Action 2:** Manage wild horse and burros herd management areas in GRSG habitat (or portions of the herd management area overlapping or within GRSG habitat) within the established AML ranges to achieve and maintain GRSG habitat objectives and achieve or make significant progress towards

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
achieving LHS, considering the full suite of approaches to maintain AML, including temporary fertility control and non-reproducing, or partially non-reproducing herds. **Management Action 3**: If GRSG site-scale habitat objectives are not being met in PHMA, IHMA, and GHMA, evaluate AMLs and adjust, if necessary, through the NEPA process where wild horse or burro use is identified as significant causal factor to not meeting LHS, or is a factor in the area not meeting the GRSG habitat objectives.
Predation
Objective: Reduce predation from increased numbers of predators resulting from anthropogenic disturbance and habitat loss and function. **Allocation: N/A** **Management Direction:** **Management Action 1:** Apply minimization measures and BMPs to new, existing, and renewal of authorizations and activities to minimize threats from predators shown to pose a threat to GRSG, consistent with applicable law. This includes, but is not limited to stopping, slowing, and/or discouraging the incursion of predators, increased levels of predators, or predators expanding into new areas. Minimization measures and BMPs include, but are not limited to, the following: a. Limit the footprint for all proposed projects to the smallest area necessary to achieve the project objectives in order to reduce habitat loss. b. Place project components within existing disturbance areas whenever possible to minimize habitat loss. c. Eliminate or minimize external food resources from anthropogenic sources (e.g., trash resources from human activities, road killed animals, carcass dumps). d. Reduce or prevent opportunities for raven and raptor perching and nesting through such measures as nest/perch deterrents and regular maintenance of the nest/perch deterrents. **Management Action 2**: For authorizations that require expanded, new, renewal, or non-routine maintenance of energy, mining, or transmission related infrastructure projects as identified in **Table 3-4** in **Appendix 3** (Greater Sage-grouse Monitoring Framework) in PHMA and IHMA, the project proponent is required to submit a predator subsidy management plan to minimize influx and support of predators as a result of the project (Refer to **Glossary** for definition of "non-routine maintenance"). The requirement to prepare a predator subsidy management plan could be waived as a result of site-specific circumstances and with State Director concurrence. The plan shall be coordinated with state and Federal agencies (e.g., USFWS and APHIS) as appropriate. The predator subsidy management plan will: a. Outline how the project will be designed to minimize threats to GRSG beyond the natural range of variability from predators; b. Describes project design features to reduce or eliminate predator subsidies (e.g., reducing raven and raptor perching and nesting by burying powerlines, removing trash food subsidies, minimizing infrastructure, locating any necessary structures out of line of site of breeding and nesting habitat, using tubular non-branching material for structures); c. Describe and outline the coordination and concurrence with state and Federal agencies, if appropriate (e.g., USFWS, APHIS). The project proponent may participate in non-lethal control of predators (e.g., removal of raven nests before eggs are present) with the written consent and permits from the appropriate agency and as determined at the site-specific analysis; d. Include a monitoring strategy to assess efficacy of the predator subsidy management plan and GRSG population response. **Management Action 3:** The BLM will collaborate with appropriate state agencies, other landowners, federal agencies (e.g., USFWS, APHIS), and Tribal governments, as appropriate and consistent with BLM policy, in their efforts to minimize impacts from predators on GRSG where impacts have been documented (e.g., reduced recruitment of GRSG from predation), including providing needed authorizations to support predator management actions.

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
Application of Habitat Objectives
Objective: **Objective SSS [X]:** Within GRSG habitat management areas provide suitable habitat by managing for connected mosaics of sagebrush and associated communities that provide for seasonal habitats, dispersal, and migration, while limiting widespread anthropogenic disturbances and fragmentation. This objective will be accomplished by applying RMP land use allocations and management actions among HMAs, proactive habitat treatments, and project-level application of mitigation (refer to Mitigation direction in this Approved RMP Amendment) for internal and external project proposals. **Objective SSS [Y]:** Manage GRSG habitat management areas to provide seasonal habitats at the HAF site-scale (Level 4) by providing for habitat characteristics that support seasonal habitat needs, including adequate protective cover and food needed to survive and reproduce. Seasonal habitats may include areas where sagebrush is the current dominant vegetation type, sagebrush is a primary shrub species within the various states of the ecological site, or dominated by other vegetation types but still provides GRSG habitats, such as mesic areas. This objective will be accomplished through the combination of RMP land use allocations and management actions and restoration – based on ecological potential, current vegetative condition, and existing seasonal values – and the project-level application of mitigation (refer to Mitigation direction in this Approved RMP Amendment) for internal and external project proposals. **Allocation:** N/A **Management Direction:** **Management Action SSS [X1]:** Assess the suitability of GRSG habitat at HAF mid- and fine-scales (HAF Levels 2 and 3, respectively) based on the methods in the Sage-grouse HAF (Stiver et al. 2015, BLM TR 6710-1, as revised; see **Appendix 4**). **Management Action SSS [X2]:** Design and implement projects that will maintain or improve habitat suitability, availability, and connectivity, based on site location, existing seasonal values, and habitat needs using the results of mid- and fine-scale habitat assessments and other complementary research, tools, or information and in coordination with partners across land management jurisdictions. **Management Action SSS [Y1]:** Assess suitability of GRSG habitat at the HAF site-scale (Level 4) based on the methods in Sage-grouse HAF (Stiver et al. 2015, BLM TR 6710-1, as revised; **Appendix 4**) utilizing current geographically applicable research on seasonal habitat requisites of GRSG (see **Appendix 4**). Updates to seasonal habitat indicators and ESDs will be developed locally and coordinated with partners (see **Appendix 4**). **Management Action SSS [Y2]:** Maintain, improve, or restore the suitability of GRSG seasonal habitats using the Habitat Indicators Table (see **Appendix 4**) to inform measurable project objectives during implementation-level planning for BLM-permitted and BLM-initiated site-specific actions in HMAs, in coordination with applicable partners. Use the results of site-scale habitat assessments and other best available information to inform management decisions and the design and implementation of habitat projects.
Mitigation
In all designated GRSG habitat, in undertaking BLM management actions, and consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, in authorizing third-party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation, the BLM will achieve the planning-level GRSG management goals and objectives through implementation of mitigation and management actions. Under this Approved RMP Amendment, management would be consistent with the GRSG goals and objectives, and in conformance with BLM Manual 6840, *Special Status Species Management*. In accordance with BLM Manual 6840, the BLM will undertake planning decisions, actions and authorizations "to minimize or eliminate threats affecting the status of GRSG or to improve the condition of GRSG habitat" across the planning area. The BLM has determined that compensatory mitigation must be voluntary unless required by other applicable law or made in recognition of state authorities that may require compensatory mitigation. Therefore, consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, when authorizing third-party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation, the BLM will consider voluntary compensatory mitigation actions only as a component of compliance with a state mitigation plan, program, or authority, or when offered voluntarily by a project proponent.

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
Project-specific analysis will be necessary to determine how a compensatory mitigation proposal addresses impacts from a proposed action. The BLM will cooperate with the State to determine appropriate project design and alignment with state policies and requirements, including those regarding compensatory mitigation. When the BLM is considering compensatory mitigation as a component of the project proponent's submission or based on a recommendation from the State, the BLM's NEPA analysis would evaluate the need to avoid or minimize impacts of the proposed project and achieve the goals and objectives of this RMP Amendment. The BLM will defer to the appropriate state authority to quantify habitat offsets, durability, and other aspects used to determine the recommended compensatory mitigation action since the states have the lead on managing GRSG within their states. The BLM will not deny a proposed authorization in GRSG habitat solely on the grounds that the proponent has not proposed or agreed to undertake voluntary compensatory mitigation unless it is required by the state. In cases where waivers, exceptions, or modification may be granted for projects with a residual impact, voluntary compensatory mitigation consistent with the state's management goals can be one mechanism by which a proponent achieves the RMP Amendment goals, objectives, and waiver, exception, or modification criteria. When a proponent volunteers compensatory mitigation as their chosen approach to address residual impacts, the BLM can incorporate those actions into the rationale used to grant a waiver, exception, or modification. The final decision to grant a waiver, exception, or modification will be based, in part, on criteria consistent with the state's GRSG management plans and policies. When the BLM receives applications for projects in GRSG habitat, the BLM will ensure project design is aligned with state requirements and will ensure the proponent coordinates with the state to develop any additional mitigation—including compensatory mitigation—that the state may recommend in order to comply with state policies and programs for the conservation of GRSG. When considering third-party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation, BLM will work with the applicant to apply avoidance and minimization mitigation options. If the proposal would have residual effects that cause habitat loss and degradation, the BLM will complete the following steps: 1. Notify the Idaho Office of Species Conservation (OSC) to determine if the state requires or recommends any additional mitigation – including compensatory mitigation – under state regulations, policies, or programs related to the conservation of GRSG. 2. If the OSC determines that there are unacceptable residual impacts on GRSG or its habitat and compensatory mitigation is required as a part of state policy or authorization, or if a proponent voluntarily offers mitigation, the BLM will incorporate that mitigation into the BLM's NEPA and decision-making process. 3. The BLM will recommend to the project proponent that it coordinate with the State of Idaho to ensure it complies with all applicable State requirements relating to its proposal. 4. The BLM will ensure mitigation outcomes are consistent with the State of Idaho's mitigation strategy and principles outlined in **Appendix F** including, but not limited to: a. achieves measurable outcomes for GRSG habitat function that are at least equal to the lost or degraded values b. provides benefits that are in place for at least the duration of the impacts c. accounts for a level of risk that the mitigation action may fail or not persist for the full duration of the impact. **MD MT 3**: In PHMA, IHMA, and GHMA, in undertaking BLM management actions, and consistent with valid existing right and applicable law, in authorizing third-party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation (**Appendix 3**, Table 3-4), the BLM will work towards achieving the planning-level GRSG management goals and objectives through implementation of mitigation and management actions. Under this Approved RMP Amendment, the BLM GRSG management would be consistent with the GRSG goals and objectives, and in conformance with BLM Manual 6840, *Special Status Species Management*, undertake planning decisions, actions and authorizations "to minimize or eliminate threats affecting the status of GRSG or to improve the condition of GRSG habitat" across the planning area. Further, the BLM recognizes that the State of Idaho's GRSG management goals and policies include mitigation that provides no net loss to GRSG, including

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
accounting for any uncertainty associated with the effectiveness of such mitigation. This will be achieved by ensuring GRSG habitat impacts are addressed by implementing mitigating actions in coordination with the State of Idaho and the Approved RMP Amendment.
Disturbance Cap
Objective: N/A **Allocation**: N/A **Management Direction**: If direct habitat anthropogenic disturbance in PHMA (or IHMA) from existing and proposed infrastructure developments exceeds either: 1) 3% at the project scale (refer to description below), or 2) 3% at the HAF fine-scale habitat selection area. New infrastructure projects will be deferred to the extent allowable under applicable laws, or valid existing rights: a. until such time as the percentage of habitat disturbance in the areas has been reduced below the cap threshold through restoration of existing disturbance to meeting habitat objectives or increasing the amount of suitable habitat through restoration, or b. redesigned to not result in additional surface disturbance (co-location), redesigned to move it outside of habitat in PHMA (or IHMA) (refer to non-habitat criteria in this table), or redesigned to move it outside PHMA (or IHMA). **Disturbance Cap Calculation** (PHMA and IHMA) *Descriptions below for disturbance cap calculations in PHMA also apply to IHMA.* Numerator The disturbance cap calculation is limited to the following specific activities, whether existing projects or new proposals (refer to **Appendix 3** for additional details on how these items will be monitored): • Oil and gas wells and development facilities • Coal mines • Wind developments (e.g., towers, sub-stations) • Solar fields • Geothermal development facilities • Mining (active locatable, nonenergy leasable and saleable/mineral material developments) • Roads; transportation features with a maintenance intensity of level 3 or 5 (BLM Technical Note 422 – Roads and Trails Terminology, 2006 or as updated) and does not include two-tracks • Railroads • Power lines • Communication towers • Other vertical infrastructure, as well as developed rights-of-way with habitat loss (e.g., pipelines) In addition to the specific activities listed above, the following additional activities will be incorporated into the numerator at the project scale: • Coal bed methane ponds • Meteorological towers (e.g., wind energy testing) • Nuclear energy facilities

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
• Airport facilities and infrastructure • Hydroelectric plants/facilities Where such data are available, this disturbance is measured by the footprint of direct disturbance of the PHMA (or IHMA) area where habitat is removed (including staging areas, dispersed structures, parking lots, equipment storage areas, etc.), or by the distance between the outermost lines for transmission lines. A disturbed area is included in the numerator until it has been restored to provide equal or improved habitat function as was provided by the area before the disturbance. When considering new project proposals, any project associated with the above list that has been approved/authorized but not yet constructed should be treated as though it were already constructed when calculating the disturbance cap to account for authorized but not yet constructed disturbance. No other activities or actions beyond those listed above are included when calculating the cap (e.g., wildfire, agriculture, vegetation treatments, residences, barns, fencing or range improvements, etc.). BLM will coordinate with state agencies and use available HAF and land health data in determining if the habitat function of an area has been restored. Consistent with the BLM's responsibility to consider cumulative impacts when making decisions for activities on public lands, the disturbance percentage includes acres from the above disturbances regardless of land ownership, where such data are available. This will only inform decision-making on public lands and cannot impact private property rights. Wildfire and agriculture will not be included in the numerator at the HAF fine-scale. <u>Denominator</u> At the project scale, the assessment area (denominator) is determined by identifying the extent of the GRSG PHMA (or IHMA) that supports the GRSG population potentially affected by the proposed project that is also located in PHMA (or IHMA); it is not to be limited to the area where indirect impacts are anticipated. The project scale denominator should include the PHMA (or IHMA) used by the potentially affected local GRSG population, including the associated seasonal habitats and the transition zones between those habitats within PHMA or IHMA associated with where the project is proposed. If sufficient monitoring information is not available to identify the portions of the PHMA (or IHMA) used by the potentially affected local GRSG population, identify project level boundaries using an approach similar to the DDCT approach developed by the State of Wyoming: 1) Determine potentially affected active or pending active leks by placing a 4-mile buffer around the proposed area of physical disturbance related to the proposed project. All active or pending active leks located within the 4-mile project buffer and within PHMA and IHMA will be considered affected by the project. 2) Next, place a 4-mile buffer around each of the affected active or pending active leks. 3) All PHMA (or IHMA) within the 4-mile project buffer, combined with the 4-mile lek buffer(s), creates the project analysis area for each individual project, absent other monitoring data. If there are no active or pending active leks within the 4-mile project buffer, the project scale analysis area will be that portion of the 4-mile project buffer within PHMA and IHMA. At the HAF fine-scale, the denominator is the acres of PHMA (or IHMA) within the boundaries of the HAF fine-scale habitat delineation area. Calculation of the 3% cap will include all acres of PHMA (or IHMA) in the fine-scale area as the denominator. At either scale, all areas in PHMA (or IHMA) will be included in the denominator unless specific information documents areas of non-habitat or unsuitable habitat (e.g., assessment process described in the Criteria Based Management for Non-habitat section, seasonal habitat maps for the HAF fine-scale assessment area, areas that are unsuitable for all seasonal habitats using HAF site-scale techniques). These areas are treated neither as habitat nor disturbance, which results in the area being removed from the denominator piece of the formula.

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
The denominator includes all lands, regardless of land ownership, to help the BLM consider the cumulative impacts of disturbances on GRSG when considering projects on public lands. **Disturbance Cap Exceptions** Authorized Officer may consider projects on public lands that could result in exceeding the disturbance cap across all ownership at the **project scale** only if the project meets the criteria for one of the following categories of exceptions and also meets the following conditions applicable to that exception: **Categories** for **Disturbance Cap Exceptions:** a. If the disturbance is associated with the renewal or re-authorization of existing infrastructure in previously disturbed sites or expansions of existing infrastructure that do not result in new direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on GRSG and its habitat, and is documented. b. If a technical team evaluates and concludes site-specific GRSG habitat and population information, combined with project design elements – including voluntary compensatory mitigation, indicates the proposed project is expected to improve the condition of GRSG habitat within the proposed project analysis area. The technical team should consist of, at a minimum, a BLM field office biologist and a biologist from the appropriate state agency. The methods, rationale, and data used in developing recommendations shall be retained as part of the project record. c. If the disturbance is within an RMP designated utility corridors, the disturbance cap may be exceeded if site specific NEPA analysis indicates doing so will decrease impacts to GRSG habitat in comparison to siting a project outside the designated corridor. This exception is limited to projects that fulfill the use for which the corridors were designated (e.g., transmission lines, pipelines) and the designated width of a corridor will not be exceeded as a result of any project co-location. The disturbance cap cannot exceed 3% at the HAF fine-scale. A plan amendment will be required for the development of new corridors and as necessary, will need to appropriately address any changes in the disturbance cap. d. If the environmental review document(s) explains how the GRSG RMP goals and objectives will be met, including avoidance first (e.g., locating the proposed projects outside PHMA (or IHMA), colocation within footprint of existing disturbance), then minimization (including application of RDFs, etc.) with appropriate documentation. The environmental review document must also consider the cumulative effects of other exceptions granted in adjacent project scale units. If avoidance is not possible and minimization does not address all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, voluntary compensatory mitigation can be considered, in coordination with the appropriate state agency. **If one or more of the exception criteria can be met, the activity associated with the disturbance must also meet all of the following conditions in order to be permitted:** a. All disturbance cap exceptions MUST have concurrence from the State Director. b. If the exception relies on voluntary compensatory mitigation, and also in compliance with state authorities: 1. The mitigation must be completed prior to the disturbance that results in the exceedance of the disturbance cap and provide the same or better value habitat based on site limitations, or better based on site limitations, **AND** 2. The compensation must be implemented in the same HAF fine-scale unit as the potential development. Consideration may be given to providing compensatory mitigation in adjacent fine-scale HAF areas if doing so will more effectively provide the offsetting benefit. c. If proposed disturbance cap exception is requested in an area that has met one of the adaptive management thresholds, no exceptions to the disturbance cap at the project scale will be considered until the causal factor analysis is completed and cause identified and corrected unless the disturbance is needed for the protection of human life and safety.

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
d. Disturbance cap exceptions (either Project or HAF fine scale) will be tracked and considered in analyses for any proposed development within the same neighborhood cluster or appropriate biological area. All requests for the use of compensatory mitigation to exceed the disturbance cap should be reviewed by the technical team for likelihood of success and efficacy of offsetting impacts to the affected habitats and associated populations. e. There will be no exceptions to the 3% disturbance cap at the **HAF fine-scale** in any state unless: i. The disturbance is needed for the protection of human life and safety. f. In the event of a conflict between the project scale and HAF fine-scale disturbance caps, the Authorized Officer may consider and grant an exception to the disturbance cap at the HAF fine-scale if, in coordination with the appropriate state agency, it is determined that the impact to GRSG of the habitat disturbance resulting in the disturbance cap being met is better assessed at the project scale. g. Apply the disturbance cap to the extent consistent with applicable law and valid existing rights.
Adaptive Management
Objective: Address unanticipated negative impacts to GRSG from potential changes in habitat conditions before consequences become severe or irreversible. **Allocation:** N/A **Management Direction:** **Management Action:** The BLM will implement adaptive management per the following Management Action to inform appropriate responses to the loss or degradation of GRSG habitat on BLM-administered lands. Where the State has an adaptive management process as part of the State's GRSG management plan, program, policy, regulation, or authority, the BLM will participate in and implement the most recent State adaptive management process, consistent with the framework outlined in **Appendix 6**. If a State is developing an adaptive management process, the BLM will participate in developing that process and, as appropriate, any state-level interagency adaptive management team. The BLM must consider the best available information about GRSG habitat and population status, which includes the States' data and other available science. States have ownership over managing GRSG populations and therefore lead the collection of GRSG population monitoring data and determination of population status (e.g., increasing, decreasing, or stable). The States' population monitoring is important for informing effective GRSG habitat management on BLM-administered lands. In coordination with State GRSG authorities and state-level interagency adaptive management teams, BLM will produce an annual summary of GRSG habitat conditions and population status, adaptive management thresholds, and any associated adaptive management responses and decisions for BLM-administered lands. This will be completed by a mutually agreed-upon date. BLM's annual summaries will include population status input and recommendations from State GRSG authorities. BLM will coordinate with State GRSG authorities regarding management decisions made in response to adaptive management thresholds and subsequent causal factor analyses and will make decisions for the management of BLM managed surface lands and mineral estate. If no adaptive management thresholds are identified during a given year, an annual review of habitat and population status by state-level interagency adaptive management teams (including State GRSG authorities) is nonetheless encouraged. Consistent with State GRSG adaptive management processes and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act ("FLPMA"), the BLM will implement the GRSG adaptive management framework outlined in **Appendix 6** in coordination with state-level interagency adaptive management teams.[11]

[11] The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires the BLM, to "resolv[e], to the extent practical, inconsistencies between Federal and non-Federal Government plans," and achieve consistency with State and local plans to the maximum extent that the BLM finds to be consistent with the laws governing public lands. 43 USC 1712(c)(9). See also 43 CFR 1610.3-1.

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA
Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
Criteria Based Management for Non-Habitat

Objective: N/A
Allocation: No allocation identified but allocations can be affected if non-habitat criteria are met.
Management Direction (can affect HMA allocation and management direction, see Tables above):
Habitat management areas include areas where the BLM will apply goals, objectives, and management actions (or management decisions) for conservation of GRSG. The HMAs are identified using inventory data on habitat use and occupancy and reflect the dynamic nature of the vegetation communities that make-up GRSG habitat. The HMA boundaries are not identified using survey-grade assessments (e.g., comprehensive on-the-ground surveys and edge verifications) and, in some states, are the result of large-scale modeling. Therefore, not every acre within an HMA boundary may be GRSG habitat. Additionally, because GRSG habitat use and occupancy and vegetation communities are dynamic, the BLM will use up-to-date high-quality information, including field investigations, to make adjustments to the management actions to be applied within identified HMA boundaries. In accordance with existing law, regulation and policy, inventories will continue to be conducted to provide information on GRSG habitat and distribution (BLM Manual 6840).

Non-habitat consists of areas that lack the ecological potential to provide principal habitat components necessary to support GRSG. In the mapped GRSG HMAs, there may be areas of non-habitat where conformance with the RMP would not support GRSG conservation. Refer to definitions for existing habitat, potential habitat, and non-habitat in the **Glossary**. If during consideration of a project level authorization within GRSG PHMA, IHMA, and GHMA, potential non-habitat is identified by the BLM, a project-specific review should be conducted by a wildlife biologist or reviewed and accepted for confirmation by the BLM. This review should use published, scientific methods (preferably more than one) for identifying GRSG habitat (e.g., Stiver et. al. 2015 [as revised], ESDs and associated STMs) and be coordinated with the appropriate state agencies. Any discrepancies between the mapped GRSG HMAs and the site-specific conditions will be disclosed, with supporting data (e.g., vegetation monitoring, STMs, ESDs) and analyzed as a component of the NEPA process. However, indirect and direct impacts to adjacent GRSG populations and their habitats, including potential habitat, still need to be considered when planning and authorizing projects in these non-habitat areas.

All management objectives and decisions associated with each management area type will apply unless all the following criteria are documented:

1. Project is proposed in verified non-habitat.
2. There are no indirect impacts to adjacent habitat or individual or populations of GRSG occupying these adjacent areas due to project design and required design features (e.g., minimize noise, preclude tall structures, require perch deterrents), as demonstrated in the project's NEPA document. Indirect impact consideration includes the following:
    (1) The project does not impact connectivity,
        i. Within or between populations, or
        ii. Between seasonal habitats (e.g., nesting, early brood rearing, winter), or
        iii. Within or between existing habitat.
3. Any project related access through/across GRSG habitat (as verified through site-specific field checks) only occurs on existing routes, and the proposed action will not include new roads or upgrades to roads that will change the vehicle use, vehicle type, or traffic volume during the applicable season of GRSG use, subject to valid existing rights, throughout all stages of the proposed project.
4. Coordination with the appropriate state and federal agency biologists and other appropriate staff has been documented. If coordination is not possible the reasons and attempts at coordination will be documented.

All proposed actions, including those in the same area, will need to undergo individual analysis to confirm the criteria are met prior to authorization. Exempting a proposed project from the management actions that will otherwise be required in a GRSG habitat management area identified on the maps in this RMPA because

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
the proposal has been determined to be in non-habitat, based on the above criteria, will not change the GRSG habitat management area boundaries as identified in the RMPA. The determination to exempt a proposed project from the management actions that will otherwise be required in the GRSG habitat management area identified in maps in this RMPA, when supported by science and consistent with the criteria above, may only be made by the Authorized Officer. If the coordinating federal and/or state wildlife biologists do not concur with the AO, then the determination will be at the discretion of the BLM State Director.
Utility Scale Solar
Utility-scale solar projects are projects with nameplate capacity (theoretical output registered with authorities) of 5 megawatt (MW) or higher that deliver electricity to the electricity transmission grid (refer to Glossary). **Objective:** N/A **Allocation:** Utility scale solar testing and development is excluded from all PHMA; development as ancillary support for other approved uses (e.g., mineral developments, data centers) could occur if one of the exceptions can be met. **Management Direction:** **Exception Criteria** Apply Exception Criteria as defined in the Fluid Mineral Lease Exceptions.
Utility Scale Wind
Utility-scale wind projects are projects larger than 1 megawatt (MW) (refer to **Glossary**). **Objective:** N/A **Allocation:** Exclusion for utility scale wind testing and development (including met towers). **Management Direction:** **None**
Renewable Energy – RE-1
Objective: N/A **Allocation:** Exclusion for nuclear and hydropower energy development. **Management Direction:** N/A
Definition of Lek
Objective: N/A **Allocation:** N/A **Management Direction:** Use the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) lek definitions (Cook et. al., 2022). (Refer to **Glossary**). Unless otherwise specifically noted, when language in the RMPs uses the term "lek" it applies to the WAFWA definition for "active lek" or "pending active lek."
Special Status Species
Objective: N/A **Allocation:** N/A

Approved RMP Amendment for PHMA Objective/Allocation/Management Direction
Management Direction: **MD SSS 29:** Subject to valid existing rights, new anthropogenic disturbances in PHMA: Anthropogenic Disturbance Screening Criteria. In order to avoid surface-disturbing activities in PHMA, priority will be given to rights-of-way (ROWs), fluid minerals, and other mineral resource projects subject to applicable stipulations outside of PHMA. When authorizing development in PHMA, priority will be given to development in non-habitat areas first and then in the least suitable habitat for Greater Sage-Grouse. The following criteria must all be met in the project screening and assessment process in order for a project to take place: a. The population for Greater Sage-Grouse in the associated neighborhood lek cluster (or, as appropriate, an alternative adaptive management unit) is not currently engaging in any adaptive management thresholds. This applies strictly to new authorizations; renewals and amendments of existing authorizations will not be subject to this criterion when it can be shown that long-term impacts from those renewals or amendments will be substantially the same as the existing development. b. The project with associated design features, avoidance, minimization, or voluntary compensatory mitigation actions will not result in a net loss of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat or of the respective PHMA. c. The project, its design features, avoidance and minimization actions, and associated impacts will not result in habitat fragmentation or other impacts causing a population decline in the associated neighborhood lek cluster (or, as appropriate, an alternative adaptive management unit). d. The project cannot be reasonably accomplished outside of the PHMA and can be either: developed pursuant to a valid existing authorization or collocated within or adjacent to the footprint of existing infrastructure. For such developments, the AO may waive criteria a. listed above, if all other criteria are met. e. Development will adhere to the RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**). f. The project will not exceed the disturbance cap (**MD SSS 27**). g. The project in PHMA is reviewed by the GRSG Implementation Team (as described in **MD SSS 44**). The GRSG Implementation Team may determine that project effects would be *de minimis* and the project would not be subject to MD SSS 29. **MD SSS 32:** Incorporate RDFs as described in **Appendix C** in the development of project or proposal implementation, reauthorizations or new authorizations and suppression activities, as conditions of approval (COAs) into any post-lease activities and as best management practices for locatable minerals activities, to the extent allowable by law, unless at least one of the following conditions can be demonstrated and documented in the NEPA analysis associated with the specific project: a. A specific RDF is not applicable to the site-specific conditions of the project or activity; b. A proposed design feature or BMP is determined to provide equal or better protection for GRSG or its habitat; or c. Analysis concludes that following a specific RDF will provide no more protection to GRSG or its habitat than not following it, for the project being proposed. **MD SSS 44:** In collaboration with the Idaho Governor's Office of Species Conservation, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Governor's Office of Energy and Mineral Resources, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, and Natural Resource Conservation Services, the BLM will form and maintain an interagency Idaho Greater Sage-grouse Implementation Team, consisting of two teams (a technical and a policy team) through a memorandum of understanding. These teams will be responsible for reviewing proposed infrastructure developments, proposed exceptions and variances, adaptive management thresholds and responses, habitat management area adjustments, and mitigation. The technical team will make recommendations to the policy team comprised of agency decision-makers who provide information for decision-making by the Authorized Officer.

Table 2. Important Habitat Management Area (IHMA) Allocations and Management Direction

This table identifies the allocations and management direction that apply in IHMA. The table describes if the Approved RMP Amendment is amending the "objective", "allocation", or "management direction" for the resource topic identified. In some instances, the Approved RMP Amendment addresses all three of these planning categories for a resource topic while in other resource topics only one or two of the categories are amended. All three planning categories are identified for each resource topic and if it is not being amended it will be identified as "N/A", not applicable. In those "N/A" instances, the 2015 or 2019 Amendment decision is not being proposed for amendment and remains in place. The existing 2015 and 2019 Amendment decisions are described in **Appendix 2**.

Maps that show where the allocations and management direction apply can be found in **Appendix 1**, Table and Maps.

Approved RMP Amendment for IHMA	
Resource Topic	**Allocations and Management Direction**
Fluid Minerals	**Allocation:** Open to leasing subject to no surface occupancy (NSO) – waivers, exceptions, modifications for new leases. Same as described under PHMA direction above (except Anthropogenic Disturbance Development Criteria **MD SSS 30** only, instead of **MD SSS 29** and MD SSS 30 for PHMA).
Saleable Minerals/Mineral Materials	**Allocation:** Open to mineral materials development. **Management Direction:** In order to support maintenance needs for existing local roads and ensure public safety, new and expansion of existing free-use permits will be exempt from Anthropogenic Disturbance Development Criteria (**MD SSS 30**), but subject to RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**).
Nonenergy Leasable Minerals	**Allocation:** Open in Known Phosphate Leasing Areas (KPLAs) subject to RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**). Outside KPLAs, open subject to disturbance thresholds, RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**).
Locatable Minerals	**Allocation:** Open, unless currently withdrawn.
Major Rights-of-Way	**Allocation:** Avoidance, subject to Anthropogenic Disturbance Development Criteria (**MD SSS 30**), including RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**).
Minor Rights-of-Way	**Allocation:** Avoidance, subject to RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**).
Livestock Grazing	Same as described under PHMA.
Wild Horse and Burro	Same as described under PHMA.
Predation	Same as described under PHMA.
Habitat Objectives	Same as described under PHMA.
Mitigation	Same as described under PHMA.
Disturbance Cap	Same as described under PHMA. The disturbance cap calculation includes both PHMA and IHMA at the fine-scale Habitat Assessment Framework (HAF).
Adaptive Management	Same as described under PHMA.
Non-Habitat	Same as described under PHMA.
Utility Scale Solar	**Allocation:** Avoidance, subject to Anthropogenic Disturbance Development Criteria (**MD SSS 30**), including RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**).

Approved RMP Amendment for IHMA	
Resource Topic	**Allocations and Management Direction**
Utility Scale Wind	**Allocation:** Avoidance, subject to Anthropogenic Disturbance Development Criteria (**MD SSS 30**), including RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**).
Renewable Energy –	**Allocation:** Avoidance areas for nuclear and hydropower energy development. **Management Direction: RE-1:** Infrastructure for nuclear and hydropower energy development in IHMA could be considered only if it can be demonstrated that as proposed or conditioned, it will not impair habitat use by GRSG (as determined in coordination with the GRSG Implementation Team) and will meet that the RMP GRSG goal and habitat objective. New projects for nuclear and hydropower energy development in IHMA must meet Anthropogenic Disturbance Development Criteria (MD SSS 30).
Lek Definitions	Same as PHMA
Special Status Species	Same as PHMA, except **MD SSS 29** does not apply.

Table 3. General Habitat Management Area (GHMA) Allocations and Management Direction

This table identifies the allocations and management direction that apply in GHMA. The table describes if the Approved RMP Amendment is amending the "objective", "allocation", or "management direction" for the resource topic identified. In some instances, the Approved RMP Amendment addresses all three of these planning categories for a resource topic while in other resource topics only one or two of the categories are amended. All three planning categories are identified for each resource topic and if it is not being amended it will be identified as "N/A", not applicable. In those "N/A" instances, the 2015 or 2019 Amendment decision is not being proposed for amendment and remains in place. The existing 2015 and 2019 Amendment decisions are described in **Appendix 2**.

Maps that show where the allocations and management direction apply can be found in **Appendix 1**, Table and Maps.

Approved RMP Amendment for GHMA	
Resource Topic	**Allocation and Management Direction**
Fluid Minerals (including Geothermal)	**Management Objective, Allocation, and Management Actions**: Same as identified in the 2015 and 2019 GRSG amendments **CSU Exception** The Authorized Officer may grant an exception if an environmental record of review determines that the action, as proposed or conditioned, will not impair the function or utility of the site for the current or subsequent seasonal habitat, life-history, or behavioral needs of GRSG due to site-specific terrain and habitat features, such as topographic features that will reduce the habitat impacts by shielding nearby habitat from disruptive factors. An exception could also be granted if it can be demonstrated by a wildlife biologist and confirmed by the BLM, based on site-specific information (using state mitigation tools such as Habitat Equivalency Analysis or Habitat Quantification Tool, or other state mitigation programs), that the impacts anticipated by the proposed activity will be offset through voluntary compensatory mitigation developed in coordination with the appropriate state agency that meets principles of GRSG mitigation identified in the RMP. **CSU Modification** The Authorized Officer may grant a modification after a review of available information, and in coordination with the applicable state agency, documents that a portion of the CSU area is nonessential, or it is identified through scientific research or monitoring that the existing area is inadequate or overly protective for maintaining the function or utility of the site for the seasonal habitat, life-history, or behavioral needs of the GRSG, including (but not limited to) reproductive display, daytime loafing/staging activities, and nesting. Both direct and indirect impacts from a potential modification should be considered. **CSU Waiver** This stipulation may be waived for a specific lek if, in coordination with the appropriate state agency, it is determined that the GRSG lek that was active or pending active has been classified as inactive as determined by the WAFWA definitions and

Approved RMP Amendment for GHMA	
Resource Topic	**Allocation and Management Direction**
Fluid Minerals (including Geothermal) *(continued)*	confirmed by the appropriate state agency. Prior to waiving the stipulations, surveys should confirm that the lek is inactive and not moved to another location in the vicinity. Any changes to this stipulation will be made in accordance with the land use plan and/or the regulatory provisions for such changes. **Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations** **Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Exception** The Authorized Officer may consider and provide temporary relief from seasonal constraints by granting an exception after documenting the review of available information associated with the site proposed for the exception. This direction applies in PHMA, IHMA, and GHMA. While the BLM considers information from all sources, the state wildlife agency can provide information directly associated with GRSG use, including whether GRSG populations are not using the seasonal habitat during that year's seasonal life cycle period. Based on this information and recommendation, and documented variability in precipitation (e.g., early/late spring, long/heavy winter), use patterns, or other applicable information the Authorized Officer may consider a one-time exception if development associated with it will not affect GRSG habitat use. **Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Modifications** The BLM may grant modifications on a case-by-case basis to seasonal restrictions if the BLM, in coordination with the state wildlife agency and other appropriate state authorities determines that granting the modification will not adversely impact the population being protected. The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a modification to the dates and areas associated with seasonal timing restrictions based on the criteria described below–after documenting the review of available information associated with the site proposed for the modification, if the geographic and temporal conditions demonstrate that any seasonal modification is justified on the basis that it serves to better protect or enhance GRSG and its habitat than if the strict application of seasonal timing restrictions are implemented. Under this scenario modifications can occur if one or more of the following conditions can be documented: • A proposed authorization is expected to have beneficial or neutral impacts on GRSG and its habitat. • Topography or other factors eliminate direct and indirect visible and audible impacts to GRSG and its habitat. • There are documented local variations that indicate the seasonal life cycle periods are different than presented. • Modifications are needed to address an immediate public health and safety concern in a timely manner (e.g., maintaining a road impacted by flooding). **Seasonal Constraints/Stipulations Waiver** The Authorized Officer may consider and grant a waiver of the stipulation on an existing lease if the area that was mapped as a GRSG habitat management area, regardless of type, when the lease was issued is no longer mapped as such through the appropriate planning process.
Saleable Minerals/ Mineral Materials	**Objective:** N/A **Allocation:** Open to mineral materials development, subject to RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**). Management Direction: N/A
Nonenergy Leasable Minerals	**Objective:** N/A **Allocation:** Open, subject to RDFs (**Appendix C**) and buffers (**Appendix B**).

Approved RMP Amendment for GHMA	
Resource Topic	**Allocation and Management Direction**
Locatable Minerals	**Objective:** N/A **Allocation:** Open, unless currently withdrawn. **Management Direction:** N/A
Major Rights of Way	**Objective:** N/A **Allocation:** Open, subject to RDFs (**Appendix C**), buffers (**Appendix B**), and mitigation, to maintain habitat supporting GRSG populations consistent with state agency habitat designations (e.g., restoration, connectivity, seasonal, or other), and to preclude negative impacts to PHMA habitats. **Management Direction:** N/A
Minor Rights-of-Way	**Objective:** N/A **Allocation:** Open, subject to RDFs, buffers, and mitigation. **Management Direction:** N/A
Livestock Grazing	Same as PHMA except RM-2 does not apply.
Wild Horse and Burro	Same as PHMA.
Mitigation	Same as PHMA
Predation	Same as PHMA except Management Action 2 does not apply.
Disturbance Cap	No disturbance cap management direction in GHMA.
Adaptive Management	Same as PHMA
Non-Habitat	Same as PHMA
Utility Scale Solar	**Objective:** N/A **Allocation:** Open, subject to RDFs (**Appendix C**), buffers (**Appendix B**), and mitigation, to maintain habitat supporting GRSG populations consistent and concurrent with state agency habitat designations (e.g., restoration, connectivity, seasonal, or other), and to preclude negative impacts to any adjacent PHMA habitats. **Management Direction:** N/A
Utility Scale Wind	**Objective:** N/A **Allocation:** Open, subject to RDFs (**Appendix C**), buffers (**Appendix B**), and mitigation, to maintain habitat supporting GRSG populations consistent and concurrent with state agency habitat designations (e.g., restoration, connectivity, seasonal, or other), and to preclude negative impacts to any PHMA habitats. **Management Direction:** N/A
Renewable Energy – RE-1	**GHMA**: Open for nuclear and hydropower energy development with minimization measures (e.g. RDFs and buffers) and mitigation, to maintain habitat supporting GRSG populations consistent with state agency habitat designations (e.g., restoration, connectivity, seasonal, or other), and to preclude negative impacts to any adjacent PHMA habitats.
Lek Definitions	Same as PHMA
Special Status Species	Same as **MD SSS 32** and **MD SSS 44** in PHMA.

Glossary

Acquisition. Acquisition of lands can be pursued to facilitate various resource management objectives. Acquisitions, including easements, can be completed through exchange, Land and Water Conservation Fund purchases, donations, or receipts from the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act sales or exchanges.

Adaptive management. A type of natural resource management in which decisions are made as part of an ongoing science-based process. Adaptive management involves testing, monitoring, and evaluating applied strategies, and incorporating new knowledge into management approaches that are based on scientific findings and the needs of society. Results are used to modify management policy, strategies, and practices.

Adjacent (rights-of-way). Installation of authorized improvements parallel, near, or next to existing authorized rights-of-way.

Allocation. The identification in a land use plan of the activities and foreseeable development that are allowed, restricted, or excluded for all or part of the planning area, based on desired future conditions.

Amendment. The process for considering or making changes in the terms, conditions, and decisions of approved Resource Management Plans or management framework plans. Usually only one or two issues are considered that involve only a portion of the planning area.

Appropriate Management Level (AML). The appropriate management level (AML) shall be expressed as a population range within which WH&B can be managed for the long term. AMLs previously established as a single number will be modified to include an upper and lower limit. For reporting purposes, the upper limit of the AML range will be used. AML applies to the number of adult wild horses or burros to be managed within the population and does not include current year's foals. All WH&B one year of age and older are considered adults (a foal is considered one year of age on January 1 of the year following its birth). The AML upper limit shall be established as the maximum number of WH&B which results in a TNEB and avoids a deterioration of the range. This number should be below the number that would cause rangeland damage (refer to Animal Protection Institute of America v. Nevada BLM, 118 IBLA 63, 75, (1991)). The AML lower limit shall normally be established at a number that allows the population to grow (at the annual population growth rate) to the upper limit over a 4-5 year period, without any interim gathers to remove excess WH&B. Some HMAs may require more frequent removals to maintain population size within AML. For HMAs that require more frequent gathers, the authorized officer should consider management options which would either extend the gather cycle or broaden the AML range; amend or revise the LUP to remove the area's designation as an HMA; or manage the HMA for non-reproducing wild horses.

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Areas within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards. The identification of a potential ACEC shall not, of itself, change or prevent change of the management or use of public lands.

Artifact. A human-modified object, often appearing on an archaeological site, that typically dates to over 50 years in age.

Authorized Officer. Any employee of the BLM to whom authority has been delegated to perform the duties described.

Best management practices (BMPs). A suite of techniques that guide or may be applied to management actions to aid in achieving desired outcomes. BMPs are often developed in conjunction with land use plans, but they are not considered a planning decision unless the plans specify that they are mandatory.

Biologically significant unit (BSU). A geographical/spatial area that includes Greater Sage-Grouse priority habitat management areas that is used as the basis for comparative calculations to support evaluation of changes to habitat. In Utah, each BSU correlates to the priority habitat management area within a population area.

Co-location (communication sites). The installation of new equipment/facilities on or within or adjacent to existing authorized equipment/facilities or within a communication site boundary as designated in the Communication Site Plan.

Co-location (electrical lines). Installation of new rights-of-way adjacent to current ROWs boundaries, not necessarily placed on the same power poles.

Co-location (other rights-of-way (ROW). The installation of new ROWs within the existing footprint of an approved ROW boundary or adjacent to an approved ROW boundary.

Communication site. Sites that include broadcast types of uses (e.g., television, AM/FM radio, cable television, broadcast, translator) and non-broadcast uses (e.g., commercial or private mobile radio service, cellular telephone, microwave, local exchange network, passive reflector).

Controlled surface use (CSU). CSU is a category of moderate constraint stipulations that allows some use and occupancy of public land while protecting identified resources or values and is applicable to fluid mineral leasing and all activities associated with fluid mineral leasing (e.g., truck-mounted drilling and geophysical exploration equipment off designated routes, construction of wells and/or pads). On BLM-administered lands, CSU areas are open to fluid mineral leasing but the stipulation allows the BLM to require special operational constraints, or the activity can be shifted more than 200 meters (656 feet) to protect the specified resource or value.

Cultural resources. The present expressions of human culture and the physical remains of past activities, such as historic buildings, structures, objects, districts, landscapes, and archaeological sites. These resources can be significant in the context of national, regional, or local history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. They may also include sacred sites and natural features of landscapes that are significant to living communities.

Cultural resource inventories. Both a systematic review of records, files, and archived databases and a survey to determine the past human use of an area.

Cumulative Impact (Effect). The impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

De-watering. The process of removing surface and ground water from a particular location.

Designated Roads and Trails. Those roads and trails that are specifically identified by the BLM as the only allowable routes for motor vehicle travel in the specific area involved. Travel on designated roads and trails may be allowed seasonally or yearlong. Additional roads or trails may be constructed and authorized for travel as need dictates in conformance with the land use plan or activity plan.

Disposal lands. Transfer of public land out of federal ownership to another party through sale, exchange, Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1926, Desert Land Entry or other land law statutes.

Disturbance response groups. A process that examines local knowledge, soil mapping data and published literature on soils, plant ecology, plant response to various disturbances, disturbance history of the area, and any other important attributes necessary to sort pre-existing ecological sites into groups of ecological sites based on their responses to natural or human-induced disturbances.

Easement. A right afforded a person or agency to make limited use of another's real property for access or other purposes.

Ecological site. A distinctive kind of land with specific characteristics that differs from other kinds of land in its ability to produce a distinctive kind and amount of vegetation.

Ecological site description. A report that provides detailed information about an ecological site.

Erosion. The wearing away of the land surface by running water, wind, ice, or other geological agents.

Ethnographic resources. Variations of natural resources and standard cultural resource types. They are subsistence and ceremonial locales and sites, structures, objects, and rural and urban landscapes assigned cultural significance by traditional users.

Exchange. A transaction whereby the federal government receives land or interests in land in exchange for other land or interests in land.

Existing habitat. Habitat that currently supports greater sage-grouse, even if not currently occupied. This can include seasonal habitats, such as wintering, nesting and brood-rearing**.**

Exploration. Active drilling, geophysical operations, surface sampling and trenching, or small scale mining or similar activities, to: a. Determine the presence of the mineral resource; or b. Determine the extent of the reservoir or mineral deposit.

Feature. In reference to archaeology, a feature is a collection of one or more contexts representing some non-portable activity, such as a hearth or wall.

Federal mineral estate. Subsurface mineral estate owned by the US and administered by the BLM. Federal mineral estate under BLM jurisdiction is composed of mineral estate underlying BLM lands, tribal lands, privately owned lands, and state-owned lands.

Federal mineral interest. See Federal mineral estate.

Fluid minerals. Oil, gas, coal bed natural gas, and geothermal resources.

Fully Processed Grazing Authorization. A grazing permit or lease that has been issued in accordance with all applicable laws, regulation, and policy including the NEPA, Endangered Species Act (ESA), and decision processes provided in 43 CFR 4160.

General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA). Lands that are, or have the potential to become, occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of PHMA, managed to sustain GRSG populations. These areas are defined differentially by state wildlife management agencies, but generally are of poorer GRSG habitat quality with reduced occupancy when compared to PHMA. Some state wildlife agencies have identified areas of GHMA as important for restoration, connectivity, or seasonal habitats. The intent for GHMA is to maintain habitat conditions to support GRSG populations consistent with the state agency designations of recovery, connectivity, or seasonal habitats. Management actions will maintain, enhance, or restore habitat for GRSG. HMAs are delineated as approximate boundaries and representations of habitat and therefore include potential or unoccupied habitat and may contain areas of non-habitat.

Geophysical exploration. Efforts to locate or better define mineral or oil and gas deposits, using geophysical methods such as seismic refraction, electrical resistivity, induced magnetism, or other methods.

Geothermal energy. Natural heat from within the Earth captured for production of electric power, space heating, or industrial steam.

GRSG nesting habitat. Areas with protective grass and high lateral shrub cover where hens nest, typically under sagebrush shrubs.

GRSG early brood-rearing habitat. Upland sagebrush sites relatively close to nest sites, typically characterized by high species richness with an abundance of forb sand insects, where sage-grouse hens raise young chicks (<21 days).

GRSG winter habitat. Sagebrush habitats that provide access to sagebrush above the snow for all food and cover requisite needs.

Habitat. Areas that currently provide GRSG resources (such as space, food, cover, and water) and environmental conditions (such as temperature, precipitation, presence or absence of predators and competitors) that promote occupancy of sage-grouse during a particular stage of its annual life cycle (e.g., breeding, nesting) and allows for them to survive and reproduce.

Habitat Assessment Framework. The Habitat Assessment Framework (HAF) is a tool to measure the suitability of GRSG habitat at multiple scales.

> **Mid-scale HAF areas**. Areas conceptually linked to GRSG dispersal capabilities in population and subpopulation areas as described by Connelly and others (2004). Mid-scale HAF delineations also conceptually provide the life requisite space for GRSG dispersal, allowing for migration movements based on the following key inputs: availability of sagebrush habitat, size and number of habitat patches, connectivity of habitat patches, characteristics of linkage areas between patches, landscape matrix and edge effects, and anthropogenic disturbances.
>
> **Fine-scale HAF areas**. Fine-scale HAF delineations generally describe the extent of all seasonal use areas used by local populations. Fine-scale areas include suitable habitats within home range areas that have contiguous mosaics of sagebrush shrublands or grassland/sagebrush connecting seasonal use areas.

Important Habitat Management Areas (IHMA) are defined as lands that encompass moderate to high-quality GRSG habitat and populations necessary for providing a management buffer for PHMA, connecting patches of PHMA, and in some cases supporting important populations and habitat independent

of PHMA. The intent for IHMA is to maintain habitat conditions that will support persistent and healthy GRSG populations.

Indicators. Factors that describe resource condition and change and can help the BLM determine trends over time.

Intact landscape. Landscapes with healthy sagebrush ecosystems that have not been disrupted by anthropogenic activities or catastrophic natural events, including invasion by non-native grasses and associated wildfires.

Invasive Species (Invasive Plant Species, Invasives). An alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. The species must cause, or be likely to cause, harm, and be exotic to the ecosystem it has infested before considered invasive.

Key areas of critical environmental concern. Special management areas that have been identified as having a high utility for GRSG conservation. These land allocations were designated in previous RMPs to protect other relevant and important resource values; however, they also contain quality GRSG habitat, are within PHMA, and contain leks. They should be priority areas for GRSG management as well as the values for which the ACEC was designated; site-specific ACEC management plans will be prepared at the implementation level.

Key research natural area. A special type of ACEC that was designated in a previous RMP to protect specific intact representative native plant communities. These areas are in PHMA and are used for long term vegetation monitoring of relatively unaltered native plant communities important for GRSG. These areas can provide baseline vegetation information on natural processes such as successional changes, and future vegetation shifts in the plant communities from changes in precipitation and temperature (climate change). Key RNAs either contain GRSG leks or are within 0.1 to 4 miles of leks and are, or likely are, used for nesting, brood-rearing, foraging, breeding or wintering.

Land tenure adjustments. Land ownership or jurisdictional changes. To improve the manageability of BLM-administered lands and their usefulness to the public, the BLM has numerous authorities for repositioning lands into a more consolidated pattern, disposing of lands, and entering into cooperative management agreements. These land pattern improvements are completed primarily through the use of land exchanges but also through land sales, through jurisdictional transfers to other agencies, and through the use of cooperative management agreements and leases.

Leasable minerals. Those minerals or materials designated as leasable under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. These include energy-related mineral resources such as oil, natural gas, coal, and geothermal, and some nonenergy minerals, such as phosphate, sodium, potassium, and sulfur. Geothermal resources are also leasable under the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970.

Lease. Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 provides the BLM's authority to issue leases for the use, occupancy, and development of public lands. Leases are issued for purposes such as a commercial filming, advertising displays, commercial or noncommercial croplands, apiaries, livestock holding or feeding areas not related to grazing permits and leases, native or introduced species harvesting, temporary or permanent facilities for commercial purposes (does not include mining claims), residential occupancy, ski resorts, construction equipment storage sites, assembly yards, oil rig stacking sites, mining claim occupancy if the residential structures are not incidental to the mining operation, and water pipelines

and well pumps related to irrigation and nonirrigation facilities. The regulations establishing procedures for processing these leases and permits are found in 43 CFR 2920. (BLM)

Lease stipulation. A modification of the terms and conditions on a standard mineral lease form established at the time of the lease sale.

Lek. The BLM is adopting the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) lek definitions (Cook et al., 2022)[12].

> **Lek.** A lek is a traditional location where at least 2 male greater sage-grouse congregate during at least 2 springs within a 10-year period to perform their strutting display and opportunistically breed with females. Although males are territorial on leks and occupy an area, not a point, the representative location for the lek is the estimated or calculated center of the display activity. The 'lek' is the standard reporting and analysis unit for evaluating population status and long-term trends.
>
> **Active lek**. A lek that has more than 2 males counted during two or more lek counts within the last 10 years.
>
> **Inactive lek**. A lek at which all observations within the last 10 years have been less than 2 males and that has had at least 2 males recorded during a lek count between 11 to 20 years ago.
>
> **Pending Active lek**. A lek with one observation of at least 2 males in the last 10 years and at least one observation of at least 2 males more than 10 years ago. This status captures leks insufficiently monitored to classify as Active, Inactive, or Historical[13] but contains or more recent observation than Pending Historical[14].
>
> **Sub-lek**. A sub-lek is similar to a lek in most respects, except that its location represents an actual activity center for a specific year or series of years while a lek can represent multiple sub-leks over an extended number of years. Sub-leks are generally ≤¼ the average inter-lek distance from other sub-leks included within the same lek. In relatively static situations, there may be only one sub-lek within a lek. The sub-lek is not used to evaluate population status and long-term trends but may be used to examine breeding behavior, habitat use, or other aspects of natural history
>
> **Undetermined Lek**. A location where male sage-grouse are displaying that has not been documented in multiple years and does not meet the definition of a lek. Sage-grouse may spontaneously display in an alternate location that is not maintained through time; therefore, any undetermined leks should be verified in subsequent breeding seasons.

Locatable minerals. Minerals subject to exploration, development, and disposal by staking mining claims as authorized by the Mining Law of 1872, as amended. This includes deposits of gold, silver, and other uncommon minerals not subject to lease or sale (17 Stat. 19-96).

[12] Note that the WAFWA definition of lek does not influence how BLM estimates buffers for protection of leks from disturbance (i.e., lek buffers can be measured from the perimeter of the area where males display when perimeters are known and the approach is supported by state wildlife agencies).
[13] Historical Lek. A lek at which all observations within the last 20 years have been less than 2 males, but previously met the definition of a lek.
[14] Pending Historical Lek. A lek with insufficient observations in the last 10 years to classify as Active, Inactive, Historical, or Pending Active. This requires one observation of at least 2 males recorded 11 to 20 years ago and may include at least one observation of at least 2 males more than 20 years ago.

Major Rights of Way. (Refer to definition in Rights of Way)

Mineral. Any naturally formed inorganic material, solid or fluid inorganic substance that can be extracted from the earth, any of various naturally occurring homogeneous substances (as stone, coal, salt, sulfur, sand, petroleum, water, or natural gas) obtained usually from the ground. Under federal laws, considered as locatable (subject to the general mining laws), leasable (subject to the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920), and saleable (subject to the Materials Act of 1947).

Mineral entry. The filing of a claim on public land to obtain the right to any locatable minerals it may contain.

Mineral estate. The ownership of minerals, including rights necessary for access, exploration, development, mining, ore dressing, and transportation operations.

Mining claim. A parcel of land that a miner takes and holds for mining purposes, having acquired the right of possession by complying with the Mining Law and local laws and rules. A mining claim may contain as many adjoining locations as the locator may make or buy. There are four categories of mining claims: lode, placer, millsite, and tunnel site.

Mining Law of 1872, as amended. Provides for claiming and gaining title to locatable minerals on public lands. Also referred to as the "Mining Law."

Minor Rights of Way. (Refer to definition for Rights of Way).

Mitigation. Includes specific means, measures, or practices that could reduce, avoid, or eliminate adverse impacts. Mitigation can include avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; minimizing the impact by limiting the degree of magnitude of the action and its implementation; rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitation, or restoring the affected environment; reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; and compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Modification. A change to the provisions of a lease stipulation, either temporarily or for the term of the lease. Depending on the specific modification, the stipulation may or may not apply to all sites within the leasehold to which the restrictive criteria are applied.

Naturalness. Refers to whether an area looks natural to the average visitor who is not familiar with the biological composition of natural ecosystems versus human-affected ecosystems. New, nonrecreational modifications are not visually obvious or evident from trails.

National Register of Historic Places. A listing of resources that are considered significant at the national, state, or local level and that have been found to meet specific criteria of historic significance, integrity, and age.

Neighborhood (Lek) Cluster. Represents a GRSG population unit and includes local aggregations of leks and seasonal habitats used by birds attending those leks based on state wildlife agency and research data.

Neighborhood Cluster Scale. Spatial scale used for population trend analyses.

No surface occupancy (NSO). A major constraint where use or occupancy of the land surface for fluid mineral exploration or development and all activities associated with fluid mineral leasing (e.g., truck-

mounted drilling and geophysical exploration equipment off designated routes, construction of wells and/or pads) are prohibited to protect identified resource values. Areas identified as NSO are open to fluid mineral leasing, but surface occupancy or surface-disturbing activities associated with fluid mineral leasing cannot be conducted on the surface of the land. Access to fluid mineral deposits would require horizontal drilling from outside the boundaries of the NSO area.

Nonenergy leasable minerals. Those minerals or materials designated as leasable under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. Nonenergy minerals include resources such as phosphate, sodium, potassium, and sulfur.

Non-habitat. Areas within the historical distribution of GRSG that are not occupied and are not capable of supporting GRSG or necessary habitats to support GRSG, and do not have the potential to provide habitat in the foreseeable future (< 100 years). GRSG may occasionally use these areas (e.g., migration), but these areas do not provide the necessary resources to support GRSG seasonally year-round.

Non-routine maintenance. Activities include realigning, upgrading, rebuilding, recontouring, or replacing a segment of or an entire powerline facility (e.g., change to higher voltage, changing from wood to metal poles, significantly increasing the pole height, adding additional lines, or change from above ground to buried). When non-routine activities are proposed, the BLM requires the holder to receive prior written approval. In certain circumstances, after further review and approval by the Authorized Officer, non-routine activities may be handled under established approaches as defined in the approved operation and maintenance plan or agreement. In some cases, an amendment to the authorization may be needed, in which case the BLM should ensure the holder submits an application to amend the authorization on Form SF-299. BLM approval must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable law, which may require additional environmental analysis and studies or surveys.

Potential habitat. An area that is currently unoccupied by GRSG but has the potential for occupancy in the foreseeable future (< 100 years)**.** These areas are capable of supporting GRSG habitats based on soil types, climate, etc., and can include areas of habitat previously disturbed but that can be restored to GRSG habitats through either natural succession or human intervention.

Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA). Areas that have the highest value to maintaining sustainable GRSG populations and can include breeding, late brood-rearing, winter concentration areas, and migration or connectivity corridors. The BLM objective intent for these areas is to maintain and enhance habitat conditions that will support persistent and healthy GRSG populations through management to minimize habitat loss and degradation. Areas are delineated using core and connectivity data or maps and other resource information that the BLM has identified in coordination with respective state and federal agencies. HMAs are delineated as approximate boundaries and representations of habitat, and therefore there may be areas of non-habitat contained within these boundaries.

Remoteness. Represents how far a visitor is from a road or trail. The farther a visitor is from a road or trail, the more primitive the remoteness setting.

Renewable energy. Energy resources that constantly renew themselves or that are regarded as practically inexhaustible. These include solar, wind, geothermal, hydro, and biomass. Although particular geothermal formations can be depleted, the natural heat in the Earth is a virtually inexhaustible reserve of potential energy.

Required design features (RDFs). Means, measures, or practices intended to reduce or avoid adverse environmental impacts. A suite of features that would establish the minimum specifications for certain activities (i.e., water developments, mineral development, and fire and fuels management) and mitigate adverse impacts. These design features would be required to provide a greater level of regulatory certainty than through implementation of best management practices. In general, the design features are accepted practices that are known to be effective when implemented properly at the project level.

Resource Management Plan Designated Corridor. A corridor designated through a Resource Management Plan Record of Decision in compliance with Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

Rights-of-way (ROW). Public lands authorized to be used or occupied for specific purposes pursuant to a right-of-way grant, which are in the public interest and which require ROWs over, on, under, or through such lands. ROWs may be issued for linear features (pipelines, powerlines, communication cable, roads, canals, access, etc.) or for sites (communication towers, airports, reservoirs, pumping stations, power generating facilities, etc.). For BLM GRSG Management ROWs are divided into major or minor depending on possible level of impact to GRSG (see below). For example, ROWs for buried linear features with limited to no surface disturbance are minor, but high voltage overhead transmission lines are major. Other projects may depend on the specific development plan and location, connected actions, and will require a determination by the BLM (refer to ROW management direction in Chapter 2, Table 2-2 and 2-3). For example, to use federal pore space for carbon sequestration would be minor, however, ROWs for associated and/or connected actions such as surface facilities to support carbon sequestration could be major depending on the scope of surface disturbance and infrastructure.

> **Major ROW**. Major ROW projects include transmission lines > 100kv and distribution pipelines > 24" diameter but may also include smaller electrical transmission and/or distribution lines and pipelines, as well as, other ROW projects that require large distances, density or footprints, with high levels of activity or surface disturbance. In addition, major ROW sites may contain multiple types of above and below ground features leading to a high density of infrastructure, or many tall structures.
>
> **Minor ROW**. Minor/Other ROW Projects include typical distribution, small transmission facilities, or low volume gathering features that create minimal surface disturbance. These types include but are not limited to local roads, pipelines, powerlines, and small communication sites.

Riparian Area. A form of wetland transition between permanently saturated wetlands and upland areas. These areas exhibit vegetation or physical characteristics reflective of permanent surface or subsurface water influence. Lands along, adjacent to, or contiguous with perennially and intermittently flowing rivers and streams, glacial potholes, and the shores of lakes and reservoirs with stable water levels are typical riparian areas (See BLM Manual 1737). Included are ephemeral streams that have vegetation dependent upon free water in the soil. All other ephemeral streams are excluded.

Runoff. The total stream discharge of water, including both surface and subsurface flow, usually expressed in acre-feet of water yield.

Sagebrush Focal Area. Areas identified by the USFWS that represent recognized "strongholds" for Greater Sage-Grouse that have been noted and referenced as having the highest densities of Greater Sage-Grouse and other criteria important for the persistence of Greater Sage-Grouse.

Spatial relationships. How one object is located in space relative to another, important for spatial analysis of cultural resources.

Split estate. This is the circumstance where the surface of a particular parcel of land is owned by a different party than the minerals underlying the surface. Split estates may have any combination of surface/subsurface owners: federal/state; federal/private; state/private; or percentage ownerships. When referring to the split estate ownership on a particular parcel of land, it is generally necessary to describe the surface/subsurface ownership pattern of the parcel.

Saleable Minerals. Minerals that may be disposed of through sales and free use permits under the Materials Act of 1947, as amended. Included are common varieties of sand, stone, gravel, and clay (See also Mineral Materials).

Season of Use. A livestock grazing permit term and condition identifying the time during which livestock graze a given area to achieve management and resource condition objectives.

Special Use Authorization. A written permit, term permit, lease, or easement that authorizes use or occupancy of National Forest System lands and specifies the terms and conditions under which the use or occupancy may occur.

Stipulation (oil and gas). A provision that modifies standard oil and gas lease terms and conditions in order to protect other resource values or land uses and is attached to and made a part of individual lease requirements at the time the lease is issued. Once a mineral lease is issued, the applied stipulations cannot generally be changed or altered. Exceptions, modifications, or waivers may be granted under certain conditions outlined in the LUP. Typical lease stipulations include No Surface Occupancy (NSO), Timing Limitations (TL), and Controlled Surface Use (CSU), and Protection of Survey Corner and Boundary Line Markers. Lease stipulations are developed through the land use planning (RMP) process.

Surface Discharge. The release of produced water onto the unconfined land surface or into an existing drainage system.

Surface Disturbing Activities. An action that alters the vegetation, surface/near surface soil resources, and/or surface geologic features, beyond natural site conditions and on a scale that affects other Public Land values. Examples of surface disturbing activities may include: operation of heavy equipment to construct well pads, roads, pits and reservoirs; installation of pipelines and power lines; and the conduct of several types of vegetation treatments (e.g., prescribed fire, etc.). Surface disturbing activities may be either authorized or prohibited (WY IB-2007-029).

Surface Management Agency (SMA). Depicts surface estate Federal land for the United States and classifies this land by its active Federal surface managing agency.

Timing limitation (TL). The TL stipulation, a moderate constraint, is applicable to fluid mineral leasing, all activities associated with fluid mineral leasing (e.g., truck-mounted drilling and geophysical exploration equipment off designated routes, construction of wells and/or pads), and other surface-disturbing activities (i.e., those not related to fluid mineral leasing). Areas identified for TL are closed to fluid mineral exploration and development, surface-disturbing activities, and intensive human activity during identified time frames. This stipulation does not apply to operation and basic maintenance activities, including associated vehicle travel, unless otherwise specified. Construction, drilling, completions, and other operations considered to

be intensive in nature are not allowed. Intensive maintenance, such as workovers on wells, is not permitted. TLs can overlap spatially with NSO and CSU, as well as with areas that have no other restrictions.

Traditional cultural property (TCP). A property that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) based on its associations with the cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, lifeways, arts, crafts, or social institutions of a living community. TCPs are rooted in a traditional community's history and are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.

Transmission line. A set of electrical current conductors, insulators, supporting structures, and associated equipment used to move large quantities of power at high voltage, usually over long distances (e.g., between a power plant and the communities that it serves).

Transmission corridor. An electric or pipeline transmission corridor is a route approved on public lands, in a BLM or other federal agency land use plan, as a location that may be suitable for the siting of electric or pipeline transmission systems.

Undisturbed habitats. Areas that are not presently directly or indirectly impacted by anthropogenic development.

Utility corridor. Tract of land varying in width forming passageway through which various commodities such as oil, gas, and electricity are transported.

Utility-scale solar. Solar projects with nameplate capacity (theoretical output registered with authorities) of 5 megawatt (MW) or higher that deliver electricity to the electricity transmission grid.

Utility-scale wind. The U.S. Department of Energy defines utility-scale wind projects as land-based and offshore projects larger than 1 megawatt (MW) (Wind Energy Technologies Office, WINDExchange, Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, U.S. Department of Energy).

Valid existing rights. Documented, legal rights or interests in the land that allow a person or entity to use said land for a specific purpose and that are still in effect. Such rights include but are not limited to fee title ownership, mineral rights, rights-of-way, easements, permits, licenses and adjudicated RS 2477 or RS 2339. Such rights may have been reserved, acquired, leased, granted, permitted, or otherwise authorized over time.

Vandalism. An action involving deliberate destruction or damage, in this case to cultural resources.

Watershed. The area of land, bounded by a divide, that drains water, sediment, and dissolved materials to a common outlet at some point along a stream channel (Dunne and Leopold, 1978), or to a lake, reservoir, or other body of water. Also called drainage basin or catchment

West Nile Virus. A virus that is found in temperate and tropical regions of the world and most commonly transmitted by mosquitoes. West Nile virus can cause flu-like symptoms in humans and can be lethal to birds, including Greater Sage-Grouse.

Wetlands. Those areas that are inundated by surface water or groundwater with a frequency sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do or would support, a prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas such as sloughs, potholes, wet meadows, river overflows, mudflats, and natural ponds.

Withdrawal. Withdrawals are used to transfer jurisdiction of management of public lands to other federal agencies.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1 – TABLES AND MAPS

APPENDIX 2 – COMPARISON OF PRIOR GREATER SAGE-GROUSE RMP MANAGEMENT DIRECTION WITH APPROVED RMP AMENDMENT

APPENDIX 3 – GREATER SAGE-GROUSE MONITORING FRAMEWORK

APPENDIX 4 – GREATER SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS

APPENDIX 5 – LIVESTOCK GRAZING BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND DESIGN FEATURES AND SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

APPENDIX 6 – ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

APPENDIX 7 - U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE SECTION 7 CONCURRENCE MEMO

APPENDIX 8 – SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES BETWEEN PROPOSED RMPA AND ROD

APPENDIX B – BUFFERS

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